

(RE)ACTIVATING FASHION DESIGN AND PRODUCTION SOURCES:

EXPLORING ITALIAN FASHION HERITAGE THROUGH DIGITAL AND PARTICIPATORY PRACTICES

ALESSANDRA VARISCO

Università IUAV di Venezia, Italy

avarisco@iuav.it

Orcid 0009-0002-5761-8920

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Abstract

The article proposes to elaborate a definition of fashion design and production heritage, with a specific focus on the Italian fashion system and manufacturing chain. It does so by proposing the case study of the workshop “Disegni, Illustrazioni, e cartamodelli” (“Drawings, Illustration, and Paper Pattern”). The workshop was developed by applying the model of the living lab, and activated within the context of the PRIN 2022 PNRR research project *ResHaping made in ITALy (RHITA - <https://www.rhita.eu/>)*. *Circular Models for Italian Fashion Heritage and Manufactures through Digital Inclusivity and Conscious Innovation*. The research conducted within fashion design and manufacturing archives, collections and museums highlighted the richness of production and process sources as a prominent part of Italian fashion heritage, which remains often unaddressed. The article proposes to investigate how a study on the status of garment design and production sources (such as sketches, textile swatches, calicos, paper patterns) might help to engage with Italian fashion heritage focusing on the multiple characteristics of design and manufacture.

Keywords: *Fashion Pedagogies, Phygital, Fashion Heritage, Manufacturing, Living Lab*

INTRODUCTION

Fashion research within GLAMs (galleries, libraries, archives, and museums) tends to adopt a garment-centered approach, which marginalises sources that document the multiple processes and authorships behind clothing design and manufacturing. The article proposes to investigate the potential of studying fashion design and production sources in the context of the Italian fashion industry. The main objective of this paper is to provide a definition of garment designs and production sources, through exemplary case studies found within Italian fashion GLAMs. These processual documents are often overlooked within the field, due to a lack of interest and un-unified methods for their investigation. As such, the research applies an experimental approach to the

study of garment design and production sources using the format of a participatory workshop activity to re-activate these materials and foster embodied engagement.

The workshop described in this paper is titled “Disegni, illustrazioni e cartamodelli” (drawings, illustrations, and patterns) and took place at Iuav University of Venice, involving students from the Bachelor’s Degree Programme in Fashion Design and Multimedia Arts. The workshop explored the potential of pattern making and digital tools to study and re-activate fashion sources. Specifically, the activity focused on materials such as drawings, illustrations, and patterns [Fig. 01], documents that, within a fashion archive, reveal design thinking and processuality.

The activity is to be considered as an exemplary

case study in the format of the living lab, developed in the context of the project *ResHaping made in ITALy* (RHITA - <https://www.rhita.eu/>). *Circular models for Italian fashion heritage and manufactures through digital inclusivity and conscious innovation* [1]. The research conducted for the development of the workshop activity involved multiple stakeholders included in the preliminary mapping developed within the first phase of the RHITA project, and regarded as best practices: Museo Fortuny (Venice), CSAC of the University of Parma, Fondazione Roberto Capucci (Udine), Lanificio Paoletti Archive (Treviso). Moreover, the workshop has been designed and conducted in collaboration with Martina Ponzoni, 3D fashion design specialist, founder, and director of *d_archive* (a platform with the purpose is to support the preservation of fashion heritage and make it accessible digitally - <https://darchive.io/>) [2]. Being both fashion designers and practitioners, we developed the workshop highlighting the potential of applying fashion design knowledge, such as pattern making and 3D fashion skills, to the study of fashion heritage. As a 3D fashion design specialist, Ponzoni provided specific knowledge in the design of digital replicas of fashion artifacts (garments and accessories) that allowed the students to interact and reactivate the archival sources in between the digital and physical dimensions.

THEORETICAL CONTEXT: ITALIAN FASHION DESIGN AND PRODUCTION SOURCES

To introduce the characteristics of garment design and production sources, the paper provides a brief context regarding where and by whom these materials have been studied and conserved; and a detailed description of the research conducted within the archives involved.

Overall, garment design and production sources are still an underappreciated type of material in Italian fashion archives, mainly because fashion heritage is fragmented among small businesses and brand archives. As Maria Luisa Frisa and Stefano Tonchi argue in the catalog of the exhibition *Italiana. L'Italia vista dalla moda 1971-2001*, of which they are curators, the absence of a clear policy on fashion and its cultures has led to the dispersion of an extraordinary heritage of artifacts produced by the constellations of designers and companies that shaped Italian fashion (Frisa & Tonchi, 2018). To overcome this dispersion, in 2023 Promemoria Group (a company founded in 2011 and expert in

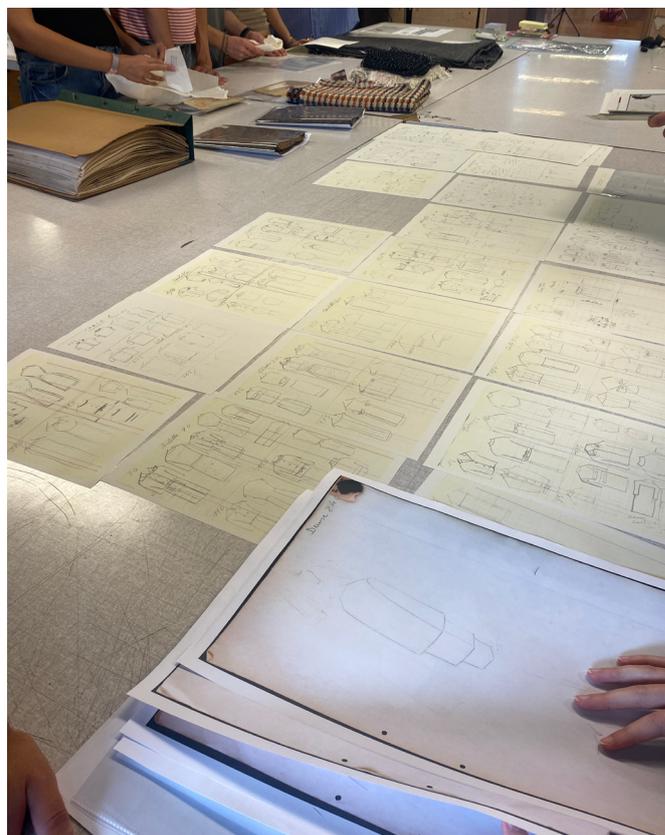


Fig. 01

corporate and institutional heritage enhancement) published, within the magazine *Archivio n°9 – The fashion issue*, an inserted poster curated by Accurat (a data visualisation design studio based in Milan) providing information about fashion archives distributed on the Italian territory and showcasing an extreme richness of materials and archive, but also emphasizing their fragmentation. Of all these process-oriented materials (such as paper patterns, calicos, sketches, and sketchbooks), fashion drawings and illustrations are perhaps the most thoroughly studied. Specifically, the research on the topic was conducted mainly in the 1980s at the CSAC (Centro Studi e Archivio della Comunicazione) of Parma University (Italy). The research center, as mentioned by its founder Arturo Carlo Quintavalle,¹ has collected a large number of fashion sketches: almost 70.000 italian fashion drawings; however, as he mentions in

¹ Arturo Carlo Quintavalle founded the research centre Centro Studi e Archivio della Comunicazione (CSAC) at the Parma University in 1968. The center has focused since its foundation on the preservation of artworks, photographs, architectural drawings, design, fashion, and graphic works, as well as organizing numerous exhibitions and publishing related catalogues.

1987, still much remains to be analysed about fashion illustration, since fashion design sources have largely been lost or simply scattered or hidden (Quintavalle in Bianchino Eds., 1987, p.10). Interestingly, fashion drawings are analysed in the context of CSAC as sources that highlight part of the design process in fashion. For this reason, Bianchino and Quintavalle often stress the importance of distinguishing between fashion illustration – designed *posteriori* to the making of the garment for communication purposes – and actual fashion design drawings – the actual design drawing that is made by the designer/*stilista*/*couturier* while developing the project, considered as actual traces of a design process (Bianchino & Quintavalle Eds., 1989).

In the catalogue of the exhibition *Italian fashion designing 1945-1980* Bianchino reflects on fashion drawing and illustration as a genre, in relation to the two modes of production and fashion design spread in Italy between 1945 and 1980: *Alta Moda* and *prêt-à-porter*.² Within *prêt-à-porter*, there is a complete turnover: if in the *Alta Moda* ateliers the design process was outsourced and the actual making was in-house, for the *prêt-à-porter* the situation is reversed, the design process is entrusted to a leading figure, the *stilista*, while the actual garment construction happens externally, in factories often located far from the site of design (Bianchino 1989, p.47). Each designer develops their own approach to the fashion sketches, based on the references that are very much specific, and differ studio by studio. The sketches are also more detailed with information on textiles, finishings and trimmings, because they are used to communicate with product developers in the industrial production (Ibidem).

Bianchino and Quintavalle, together with Bonizza Giordani Aragno (1982) investigated the role of fashion drawings in the study of Italian fashion

² In Italy, the birth of *prêt-à-porter* is generally dated to 1975 as the “official starting date”. However, Bianchino agrees with several fashion journalists in tracing its origins back to 1972, one year after Walter Albini’s autumn/winter 1971-72 fashion show in Milan at Circolo del Giardino; for the author by 1974, a new era was firmly established when Missoni, Krizia, Caumont, and Trell presented their collections in Milan. Bianchino, however, specifies: “Per noi *prêt à porter* non vuole solo dire ‘moda pronta’ ma piuttosto un diverso modo di intendere la moda, un diverso modo di progettare, non solo gli abiti, ma anche il comportamento, il corpo.” (“For us, *prêt-à-porter* does not merely mean ‘ready-to-wear’ but rather a different way of understanding fashion, a different approach to design – not only of clothing, but also of behaviour and the body.”) (Bianchino 1989, p. 44).

between the 1950s and 1980s. Their work shades light on the potential of analysing such documents from a cultural perspective, they highlight the existence of other figures than the designer, such as the illustrator, but they are also capable of explaining the dynamics of each fashion system: on one hand the *Alta Moda*, on the other hand the *prêt-à-porter*. From Bonizza Giordani Aragno’s research on fashion drawings (1982), a key aspect emerges: the intention to draw attention to the ‘hidden side of fashion,’ identifying drawing as a ‘less celebratory’ element accessible only to industry experts (Ivi, p.10). While fashion studies tend to focus on the garment in relation to its formal description, to the brand and designer biography or the biography of the wearer, many phases of the design and production process remain unaddressed. Fashion drawings have attracted the interest of many art historians, likely because these drawings can be examined through the lens of traditional art genres (Bianchino, 1989, p. 39). Many other sources documenting other phases of the fashion design and production processes still need in-depth research and appropriate methods to be studied.

EXEMPLARY CASE STUDIES FOUND IN ITALIAN FASHION GLAMS

The research conducted within Italian fashion GLAMs encompassed museums, private collections, and manufacturers’ archives. This diversity of institutional and non-institutional sources also highlights the widespread distribution of fashion heritage across Italy. Within the context of this study, all recovered materials are considered equally significant, as they contribute pieces to a broader history that includes not only the well-known names of renowned *couturiers* but also the knowledge and practices of numerous other actors in the Italian fashion landscape.

The materials collected from diverse GLAMs can be organised into different categories: fashion sketches and illustrations; textile swatches (including technical descriptions and colour recipes); printing matrix; and manuscript paper patterns. The categories will be described in the following paragraphs.

(i) Fashion sketches and illustrations:

- (1) Fashion sketches and illustrations by Roberto Capucci conserved by the Fondazione Roberto Capucci [3]. Among

the many sketches and drawings conserved within the foundation, the research conducted in the archive led to the selection of three specific cases:

The illustrations of two of the most iconic lines developed by Roberto Capucci: The *Bocciolo Line* Spring/Summer 1956 and the *Scatola Line* Autumn/Winter 1958; and a collection of multiple drawings and sketches Spring/Summer 1966. Compared to the illustrations of the *Bocciolo* and *Scatola* lines, which are probably illustration designed a posteriori, the sketches for the Spring/Summer 1966 collection clearly showcase the design approach of the couturier to the development of the collection. The process involved sketching and drawing on a large scale, sketching multiple different lines until the individualising the final selection.

- (2) Fashion sketches from the Krizia Collection conserved at the CSAC of Parma University [4]. In this case, the collection has been consulted through the digital database, which allows the selection of a few case studies: five different sketches of diverse collections dated between 1968 and 1976. The sketches showcase a specific approach to fashion design, that of Italian prêt-à-porter. However, no clear information was available regarding the illustrator or designer, but also the actual final garments, whether they had been put into production or not.

(ii) Textile swatches:

- (1) The textile swatches were selected from the Archive of Lanificio Paoletti [5]. The research has been conducted both within the current archive (a room preserving recent collections) and within the historical archive of the Lanificio Paoletti, dating from the nineteenth century onwards, preserving fabric and yarn sample books, production management ledgers, design and manufacturing tools, manuals and specialist journals, historical photographs, and correspondence. Moreover, the research has involved the textile design team, together with other professionals working in the factory that has been of great importance for the selection of the sources.

The selection included two different samples of Chanel textiles, designed by the design team of the woolmill, based on the suggestions of the Chanel design department, together with each's own fabric specification sheet; two samples of textiles from the historical archive dating back to 1977 with their own fabric specification sheet; a manuscript fabric sample book dating back to 1992/1993; and original yarn dye recipe sheets used and still in use for colour development.

(iii) Printing matrices:

- (1) The collection of the Fortuny Museum [6] is of great importance to the current research, because it includes not only printing matrices, but also patents of printing and textile techniques invented by Henriette Fortuny and Mariano Fortuny, textile samples, photo documentation, tools, machinery, and books of inspirational images and drawings collected by Fortuny over the years. The printing matrices are of specific interest, since they resemble the shape of a garment's pattern, thus facilitating the reconstruction of the garment for which they were created, but also a specific technique and process. Together with the Museum director Cristina Da Roit, we selected five sets of printing matrices, each belonging to a specific gown or overdress.

(iv) Manuscript paper patterns

- (1) Among the selected sources, I recovered a collection of manuscript paper patterns. These items belonged to a home-based professional dressmaker, Lucia Faccoli. The patterns are manuscripts dating between 1987 and 1996, from the pattern company Marfy s.r.l.. The dressmaker used to order specific patterns from the pattern company delivering the specific measurements of the client and would receive the manuscript pattern adapted to the client's body via post in a paper envelope.

All these diverse materials showcase the variety of sources that can be included in a fashion archive,

but also the variety of stories and narratives that emerge from these diverse materials. Often overlooked, these garment design and production sources do not have a specific approach to the way of cataloguing, studying or displaying. This lack of clear structure, however, proved to be an interesting space for experimentation, as it happened with the workshop “Disegni, illustrazioni e cartamodelli”.

WORKSHOP AS A PRACTICE AND AS A RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

As briefly mentioned in the previous chapter, the lack of a clear structure to approach, study and investigate sources that trace garment design and production processes in fashion archives led to question through which approach could such sources be engaged. Moved from a personal inclination – being a fashion designer and pattern maker by training – the research shifted towards a design-based approach. This approach also aligns with contemporary fashion research that is growing at the intersection of artistic research, practice-based approaches and theoretical dissemination practices (Gaugele & Titton, 2022, p. 3). Furthermore, the rise of design and practice-based



Fig. 02

research methods, allowing for a proximity between thinking, making and wearing (Torres in Gaugele & Titton, 2022, p. 60), challenges dominant fashion epistemologies (Bruggeman, 2025). Thus, instead of focusing on great narratives, star designers and high-end hegemonic brands, practice-based research centers the making process, on the direct experience of the researcher, towards embodied, intimate and diverse perspectives.

Therefore, these process sources (fashion sketches and illustrations, textile swatches, printing matrices, and manuscript paper patterns) were re-activated through a participatory and collective research approach in the format of a workshop. Ørngreen and Levinsen (2017) identify three different perspectives to consider and conduct workshops within an academic and research context: workshops as a means, workshops as practice, and workshops as a research methodology (Ørngreen & Levinsen, 2017, p.72). Even though no specific quantitative data were collected in a structured way, we still can consider the workshop “Disegni, illustrazioni, e cartamodelli” as a research method, because it served to observe the potential of design-based approaches to the study of garment design and production sources. However, the activity is mainly to be intended as a practice, a designed participatory project wherein participants were invited to engage with the materials, to re-activate them and to produce critical and collective reflections on ways of making, designing and producing fashion.

Furthermore, Thoring, Mueller, and Badke-Schaub (2020) identified different approaches to document a workshop activity as a research methods: notes and direct observation, photos, video recordings, audio recordings, Interviews, group discussions, survey and questionnaires, and produced artifacts (Thoring et al., 2020, p. 5041). Not all the approaches were used to document this activity, however we privileged notes, direct observation, photos, group discussions and we collected an output in the form of a PDF to read and reflect on the research developed by participants.

CASE STUDY: “DISEGNI, ILLUSTRAZIONI, E CARTAMODELLI”

The workshop “Disegni, illustrazioni e cartamodelli” consisted of a two day activity on the 24th and 25th of June 2025. The participants were students from Iuav University of Venice enrolled in the bachelor’s degree programmes in Fashion Design and Multimedia Arts, specifically the second year Fashion Design design *curricula*

students and third year New Media and Fashion Communication *curricula* students. The materials listed in chapter 2.1 were brought into the atelier 2.7 at Magazzino 7 (one of the ateliers commonly used by students for their design and pattern making classes), where students were organised into seven groups of 4/5 participants each. After a brief introduction, we gave the groups time to explore the materials hands-on and to select a case study to explore within the activity [Fig. 02].

The objective of the workshop was to identify through the research the garment to which these design and production sources belonged (or a speculative similar version), to develop a contextual historical and iconographic research and to make the pattern of the garment in order to be able to develop a 3D version of the object using digital software guided by 3D fashion specialist Martina Ponzoni in an approach defined as “Digital Craftsmanship” (Varisco et al., 2025). This would lead to explore the potential of digital tools in studying and reactivating archival fashion sources, especially those materials such as sketches, illustrations, and paper patterns, which document the design and production processes but are often overlooked in garment-centered archival research. Participants were invited to reflect on the role of these design-based materials in shaping fashion knowledge and epistemologies.

The activity was designed in five phases: item record, research, garment record, pattern making, and digitisation.

- (1) The Item record phase consisted of completing a documentation form aimed at analysing the selected source. The idea was to guide the participants through a first in-depth observation phase of the source they selected. The analysis was carried out using a structured item record developed *ad hoc* for these types of materials (and for the workshop).
- (2) In the research phase, in order to digitally reconstruct a garment starting from an archival source, a research activity was conducted to contextualise the selected document from a historical, stylistic, and design perspective. Moreover, participants were asked to collect materials useful for defining the characteristics of the garment from a tactile perspective. This phase provided the documentary and material



Fig. 03

basis necessary to proceed with the subsequent digital reconstruction of the garment.

- (3) Afterwards, students were asked to fill in a garment record, to describe, based on the research conducted, the garment they were planning to reconstruct in 3D. This activity produced an overview of the distinctive elements of the garment, providing a structured foundation for initiating the digital reconstruction process.
- (4) In the pattern making phase, based on the research conducted and the analysis of the selected document, the garment's pattern was reconstructed [Fig. 03]. In the absence of precise measurements (since the garment was not physically available, but rather reconstructed from speculative hypothesis), reference was made to the standard size used for the relevant garment category (*prêt-à-porter* or *haute couture*), drawing on complementary sources and iconographic references to achieve a reconstruction that was as faithful and

consistent as possible.

- (5) The digitisation phase was carried out using a 3D software and involved different actions: importing the pattern (from analog to digital), organising the pattern within the 2D workspace on the software system and renaming the pieces according to their function with the addition of the necessary technical indications (notches, pleats, elastics, etc.). Afterwards, a suitable avatar was selected, its measurements adjusted, and its appearance modified to resemble a mannequin for simulation purposes. The pattern pieces were positioned around the avatar and digitally stitched together to make the garment.

Each group selected one or multiple sources from the table: group 01 selected printing matrices from Museo Fortuny; group 02 a drawing from the Krizia Collection (CSAC); group 03 selected the manuscript fabric sample book together with original yarn dye recipe sheets from the Lanificio Paoletti; group 04 worked from the Roberto Capucci's collection of drawings and sketches, Spring/Summer 1966; group 05 worked on the

illustration of the *Scatola* line by Roberto Capucci; group 06 selected one of the manuscripted Marfy patterns; group 07 started from another drawing from the Krizia Collection (CSAC).

The activity concluded with two collective moments: an initial mapping of the research processes and a second moment dedicated to the presentation of each group's project [Fig. 04]. The mapping was structured around several key themes that highlighted the main topic of the activity conducted: design, authorship, production, process, inspiration, and collectivity. This mapping made it possible to share the reflections that informed each group's research, and above all to highlight the relationships between the provided themes, across the different research paths and initial sources. The presentation of the individual projects allowed participants to narrate their research processes, from the initial study to digitisation. In total, seven projects were produced based on the different materials provided [Fig. 05].

CONCLUSION: WHAT FASHION DESIGN AND PRODUCTION SOURCES MIGHT TEACH US

This conclusive chapter is articulated into two

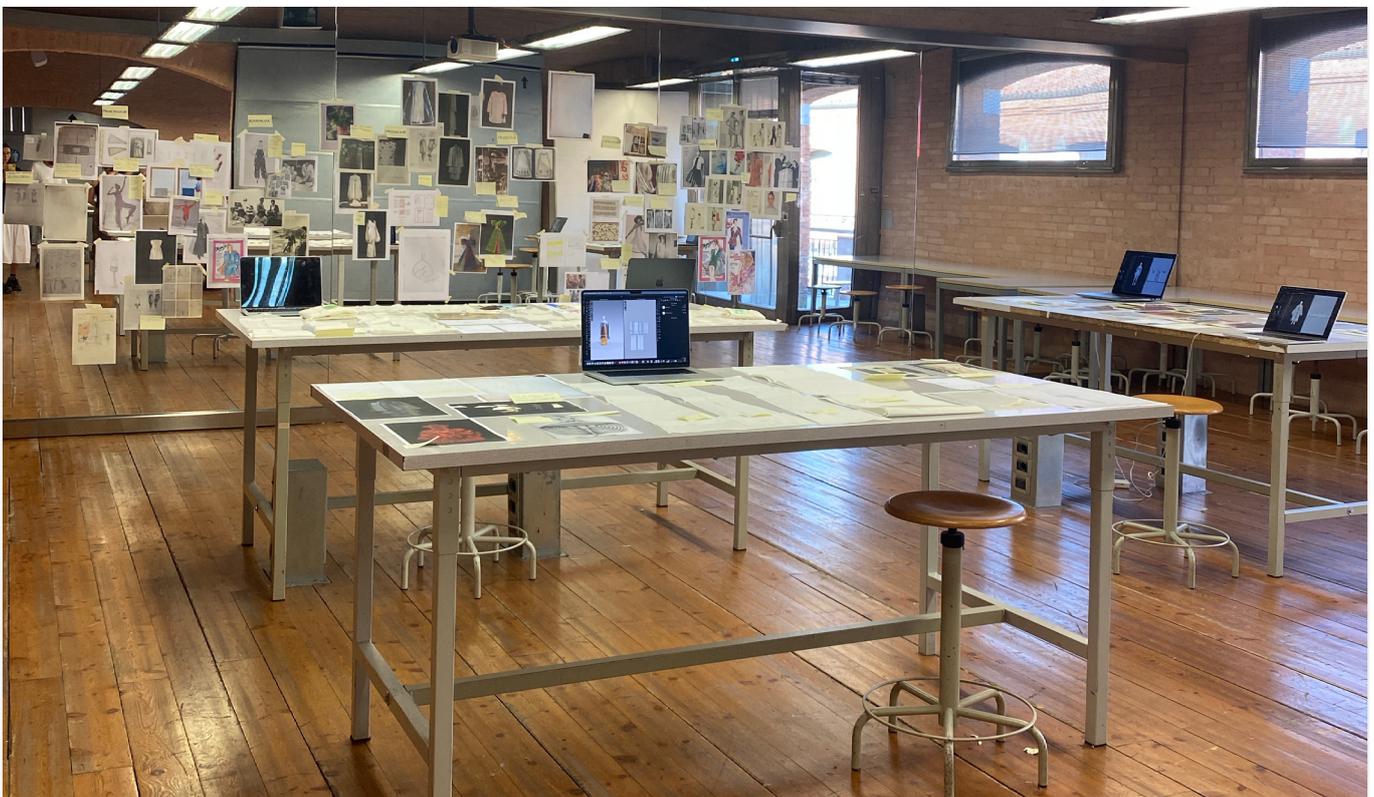


Fig. 04



Fig. 05

parts. The first part aims to describe the projects developed by each of the groups; regarding this aspect of data analysis, it is important to highlight that the aim of the workshop was not that of learning a new skill or collecting specific quantitative data. Rather, the activity functioned as a tool to activate conversations, analysis, and critical reflections on the topic of garment design and production; specifically, looking at how these processes are preserved within Italian fashion archives. As such, the discussion on the workshop's output resulted in a qualitative observation regarding the engagement of the participants and the development of each group's project. The second part of this conclusion deals with both the topic of garment design and production source (trying to define these materials in light of the research conducted) and the topic of fashion education, highlighting the potential of bringing the archives into the classroom, merging fashion design and digital skills. This final conclusive paragraph also highlights future implications of this type of approach for fashion studies and the fashion industry.

DISCUSSION ON THE WORKSHOP RESULTS

To conclude, a few aspects could be highlighted by describing the project developed by each of the groups and how these aspects merged within the collective discussion and mapping of the research. The scope of the workshop, in fact, was not to develop a perfect speculative 3D digital replica of the missing garment. Rather, the aim was to use iconographic and historical research, in combination with design-based approaches to activate critical reflection on the Italian fashion industry, its values and its dynamics.

Group 01, for instance, clearly applied fashion design competency to understand which printing matrix belonged to which part of the garment, together with historical and visual research that allowed for understanding the common shapes of the garments developed usually by Mariano Fortuny [Fig. 06]. Interestingly, their research also reflected on the topic of inspiration and cultural appropriation. Inspired by Tanveer Ahmed perspective on antiracist fashion design (Ahmed in Mareis & Paim, 2021) they questioned the uses and merge of symbols coming from specific cultures that were applied by Fortuny on garments for aesthetic purposes without specific contextualisation. Similarly group 07

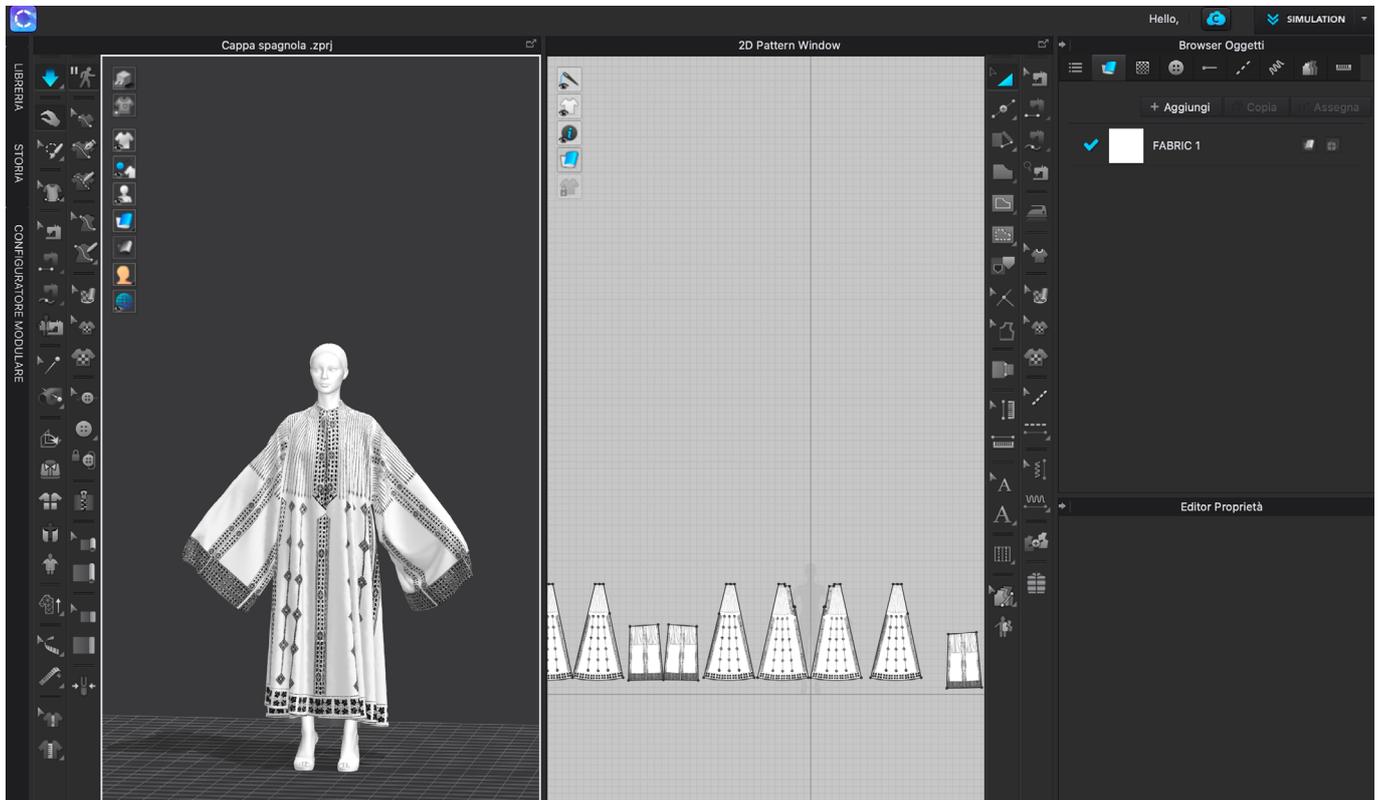


Fig. 06

questioned the iconography of the symbol drawn on the Krizia sketch (an illustration by Japanese graphic designer Tadanori Yokoo), figuring a smiling mouth with the tongue sticking out. They discovered that it represented a symbology from the iconography of the Hindu goddess Kalika and thus questioned its use by an Italian designer as cultural appropriation. Moreover, by studying the usual lines of the Krizia brand contemporary to the sketch, they were able to speculate the shape of the garment, understanding it might be a jumpsuit instead of a two-piece, as one would say at a first glance. The study of garment shapes was instead facilitated for group 06 who started from the manuscript Marfy patterns, however the group was confronted with the topic of size and body standardisation. Researching editorials and images from the time when their pattern was released (1990) they noticed a lack of diversity in body shapes, rather, the pattern was made for a specific client and thus had precise measures. The group also developed an in-depth research on the company Marfy and the relations with home-based professional dressmakers, noticing a lack of information on the subject. As a recurrent topic, lack of information was also a core aspect of the research developed by group 02 on another Krizia

sketch. The group was not able to find the image of that exact garment within Krizia's collections of that time; this raised questions on whether the garment had actually been produced, if so, by whom? And for whom, a model or a specific client? Moreover, the group raised questions on the topic of authorship: historical and iconographic research led them to make the hypothesis that the creative director (better say stilista at that time, 1968) could have been Walter Albini. The topic of authorship was also raised by group 03 who dealt with the manuscript fabric sample book by Lanificio Paoletti. They noticed that the name of the textile designer was never mentioned. Overall, topics such as bodies, garment structure and shapes, design process and authorship were also raised by group 04 and 05 who worked starting from Roberto Capucci's heritage. Both groups were confronted with the pattern making process, specifically for the *Scatola* line, for the complexity of reconstructing certain volumes. Furthermore, they noticed a lack of information about seamstresses and makers who would work in the atelier and make the sketches into actual garments.

The workshop proved to be an effective tool for the reactivation of garment design and production

sources, functioning as a critical platform to engage with the Italian fashion industry and a selection of companies mapped within the RHITA project. The activities operated both as a living lab and as an educational framework, enabling participants to interrogate archival materials through practice-based methods. Furthermore, the workshop underscored that digital technologies in fashion archives should not be understood merely as innovative tools; rather, they require careful contextualisation and can serve as powerful instruments for the critical re-examination of fashion histories.

EDUCATION AND PHYGITAL: BRINGING FASHION ARCHIVES INTO THE CLASSROOM

Within this framework, the workshop can be considered also as an educational device that brings fashion archives directly into the classroom, positioning design and production sources as active tools for learning rather than as static objects of preservation. Considering that Italian fashion heritage still lacks a well established cultural policy for the constitution of a museum (Monti in D'Acunto et al., 2024, p. 343), the workshop overcomes this situation by letting different archives and collections communicate with each other for educational purposes. Moreover, as highlighted by Rodríguez Schön and Valle-Noronha (2025), one of the central challenges in engaging with fashion heritage lies in rendering visible the creative and technical processes behind garments, including their material construction and use. "Disegni, illustrazioni, e cartamodelli" responds to this challenge applying a workshop-led pedagogy to highlight design, production and processual knowledge. Recent scholarship in design education calls for a systemic shift in design pedagogies, emphasising alternative approaches that rethink how design history is taught, learned and experienced (Mareis & Paim, 2021). In the field of fashion, this shift involves moving towards the reform of fashion's "operating procedures", including how projects begin and how design practice is taught (Gardner & Mohajer va Pesaran, 2023).

Within this perspective, workshops function as spaces where imagination, speculation and material engagement can coexist, in line with the perspective of Rodríguez Schön and Valle-Noronha (2025): "The use of speculative methods to engage with archives emphasizes the use of imagination as a tool for resistance and archival reinvention [...]" (p.11).

The educational potential of such approaches is further expanded through the uses of digital tools, which might facilitate a critical analysis of fashion sources from more artistic and design based perspectives (Varisco et al., 2025). However, while digital technologies have only apparently transformed access to fashion heritage and enabled new forms of participation (Adil & Smelik, 2024; Pecorari, 2019), their application still raises critical questions regarding materiality, haptic experience and the risk of reducing archives to mere visual transpositions. Literature highlights both the advantages of digitisation, such as the preservation and accessibility of fragile garments and the use of 3D visualisation to explore objects from multiple viewpoints (Bloemberg, 2024; Kang & Lin, 2024), and its limitations, particularly the distancing from embodied and sensory knowledge. In response, recent design-based research stresses the need to move beyond simple digitisation towards phygital strategies capable of reactivating intangible knowledge related to manufacturing processes, movement and critical thinking (Calanca, 2020; Vandi et al., 2024).

The workshop "Disegni, illustrazioni e cartamodelli" is positioned in this in-betweenness, and aims to showcase the potential of merging digital tools with in-depth research, but also with analogical practices of pattern-making that are capable of engaging participants in an embodied experience.

Lastly, regarding the definition of fashion design and production sources, the article and the research conducted proves that there can not be an univocal way of defining such sources, since fashion processes are strongly fragmented, diverse and multifaceted. However, these materials can be categorised (as in the example of the case studies mentioned above: fashion sketches and illustrations; textile swatches; printing matrix; and manuscript paper patterns), they can be filed and described within fashion archives. Many of the groups discovered interesting aspects related to processuality that would have probably not been inquired in a garment-based research. The study of such document might lead to highlight complexities of the system, and can serve as sources to document the cultural value of production and manufacturing, but also its criticalities and damaging layers such as pollution, waste, un-ethical labour conditions and un-recognised authorships, all topics that need further investigation to "re-shape" the values of the Italian fashion system.

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FOOTNOTES

[1] RHITA is a design-led research project that has been developed as a collaboration between five Italian public Universities (Università degli Studi della Campania “Luigi Vanvitelli”, Politecnico di Milano, Università degli Studi di Firenze, Università Iuav di Venezia, Università degli Studi di Siena), within four different regions (Campania, Lombardia, Veneto, Toscana). RHITA is a PRIN 2022 PNRR research project, a project funded by the Italian Ministry of Universities and Research (MUR) as part of the Research Projects of National Interest program, supported by the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (PNRR).

[2] *d_archive* emerged in 2022 from the collective effort and ideas of four people with a common ground and long experience in 3D fashion design and development: Virgile Bioss, Erisa Ibrahim, Martina Ponzoni and Daniele Scarante (Varisco et al., 2025).

[3] The Roberto Capucci Foundation was founded in 2005 is built around the Capucci Archive, its core heritage, which brings together an extensive and continuously expanding collection begun in 1951. The archive includes sculptural garments and haute couture creations, original sketches and drawings, colour and black-and-white illustrations, photographs, audiovisual materials, and a press archive. For further information see: <https://siusa-archivi.cultura.gov.it/cgi-bin/pagina.pl?TipoPag=cons&Chiave=12663>

[4] At present, the Centro Studi e Archivio della Comunicazione (CSAC), described in the previous chapter, still promotes research activities centred on building a major collection dedicated to art, photography, architectural drawings, design, fashion, and graphic design, alongside an active programme of exhibitions and scholarly publications. For further information see: <https://www.csacparma.it/chiamo/>

[5] Lanificio Paoletti is a historic Italian textile mill located in Follina (Treviso) specialised primarily in carded wool fabrics such as Shetland, Tweed and Harris-type cloths. Although today Lanificio Paoletti is a small-scale enterprise, it boasts over 230 years of history and has reached its tenth

generation, with textile production continuously carried forward within the same family. The company develops two collections each year—Autumn/Winter and Spring/Summer—with the winter collection representing its core focus, reflecting its strong expertise in wool fabrics. For further information see: <https://www.lanificiopaoletti.it/identita/storia/>; the information has been collected also within an interview with Paolo Paoletti, currently CEO of the Lanificio Paoletti.

[6] The Museo Fortuny is located in Venice, at Palazzo Pesaro degli Orfei which has been Mariano Fortuny y Madrazo's home since 1898, and subsequently an atelier and even a small textile and clothing factory. The Fortuny Museum opened to the public in 1975, and in 1978 the acquisition of the ground-floor entrance completed the integrity of the entire complex. For further information see: <https://fortuny.visitmuve.it/il-museo/sede/la-sede-e-la-storia/>

CAPTIONS

[Fig. 01] Drawings, illustrations, and patterns brought in class for the workshop activity at Iuav University of Venice, June 2025.

[Fig. 02] Manuscript paper patterns and textile samples brought in class for the workshop activity at Iuav University of Venice, the students are observing the materials before choosing the one to work with, June 2025.

[Fig. 03] Work-in-progress pattern making phase during the workshop “Disegni, illustrazioni e cartamodelli”, June 2025.

[Fig. 04] Collective mapping of the projects and final presentation of the workshop results, June 2025.

[Fig. 05] Workshop results, overview of the garments developed in 3D as output of the speculative research conducted on garment design and production sources.

[Fig. 06] Group 01 project output, 3D digital replica of a garment, resulted from their work on Marian Fortuny's printing matrix.

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