

# EXPANDED MATERIALITY IN THE RHITA ECOSYSTEM: TOWARDS A MANIFESTO FOR INTRA-ACTIVE FASHION

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## Abstract

This paper analyses the RHITA (ResHaping made in ITAly) project, presenting it as both a theoretical and operational laboratory for structurally rethinking the fashion system through the paradigm of expanded materiality. Drawing on Spinoza's immanentist materialism and Barad's agential realism, the essay describes fashion as an interactive system in which matter, bodies, technologies, and territories are interconnected and constantly evolving. In this perspective, the fashion product is no longer a stable object but a temporary assemblage of heterogeneous forces and dimensions, both physical and digital.

The visual identity of the RHITA project is based on broader reflections arising from two phenomena observable in quantum physics – the entanglement and the gravitational field - used as metaphors for the ability to attract and connect elements that appear distant or unrelated. Digital technologies are not understood as tools of dematerialisation, but rather as devices that enrich matter by multiplying its levels of existence. Sustainability, instead, is reinterpreted not only as a necessary condition for the project's existence and for optimizing a drifting system, but also as a form of systemic friction.

The paper concludes with a draft manifesto of ten principles proposing an intra-active fashion approach oriented toward ecological co-responsibility, co-evolution with the digital realm, and the construction of sustainable plural futures.

**Keywords:** *Fashion Theory, Fashion Practices, Neomaterialism, Digital Technologies, Intra-action*

## THE GENERATIVE THEORETICAL PREMISES OF THE RHITA PROJECT

Every technological advance produces a change in perspective and transforms the cognitive models through which we perceive and interact with reality. The introduction of a new technology implies a different way of organising the project and translating it into operational knowledge. (Marotta & Scarpitti, 2025). Starting from this, technology is configured as an enabling process where design is a reflection of these changes. In the case of the fashion system, in particular, the project not only reproduces these changes, actively participating in their constitution, but also becomes a tool that amplifies, experiments with and mixes them through new systems of invention, generating continuous hybridisations and further

developments. The *RHITA Reshaping Made in Italy* project is structured within this constantly evolving framework, with the aim of creating a collaborative network between five Italian public universities (the University of Campania 'Luigi Vanvitelli', the Polytechnic University of Milan, the IUAV University of Venice, the University of Florence and the University of Siena), which have been involved in fashion for over a decade.

The very title of the project, '*Reshaping Made in Italy*', indicates a clear desire to reshape the sector's evolutionary trajectory, intertwining multiple dimensions: historical, productive and environmental. The subtitle, '*Circular models for Italian fashion heritage and manufactures through digital inclusivity and conscious innovation*', refers

to the design of innovative and inclusive circular models that bring together both fashion's cultural heritage and new technologies. In a co-evolutionary perspective between sustainable technologies and processes, the *RHITA (ResHaping made in ITAly)* project aims to build a creative ecosystem geared towards the digital and sustainable transition of fashion in Italy.

The project is structured around several key actions, such as mapping the Italian fashion landscape, experimenting with innovative design practices, remodelling manufacturing in a green and tech-oriented way and, finally, designing a Web 3.0 platform capable of strengthening and disseminating the established network.

*RHITA's* reimagining of Made in Italy adopts a co-participatory and transdisciplinary methodology, visualising the fashion system as a physical space defined by co-agents, forces and attractors, which act through continuous flows and dialogical practices (Glissant, 2019). This operational imagery forms the basis for both the visual image of the project and the idea of a fashion system understood as a relational field of attractive forces and material, informational and symbolic flows.

The fashion-oriented product, in fact, does not coincide only with the final object or artefact, closed in on itself, but with a continuous and rhizomatic process (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/2006) that includes origin, transformation, use, disposal and possible regeneration. Starting from this vision of concatenations (De Landa, 2006), the *RHITA* project has become a privileged opportunity for experimentation to activate circular and conscious models and unexpected and intertwined manufacturing processes.

Broadening the horizon of contemporary design, if in the 21st century design has ceased to be a problem-solving practice, limited to form and function, the new century also and above all defines design as a practice of sense-making (Manzini, 2015) and world-making (Escobar, 2018).

In light of these theoretical references, *RHITA* aims to establish itself as a creative ecosystem capable of critically questioning fashion production regimes: the goal is to challenge the industry's degenerative processes and, at the same time, explore alternative design practices that promote more ethical, responsible and regenerative models (Kothari et al., 2021). In this sense, the project is an opportunity to reflect on the broader processes of technological and cultural transformation that are redefining the contemporary fashion system, contributing to

the construction of possible worlds and alternative models of relationship between manufacturing, the environment and society.

Based on the above-described objectives relating to the project's fashion practices, the neomaterialist condition appears to be the most relevant theoretical premise for the establishment of a new way of thinking about and making fashion. This is because fashion is a condensation of the tangible and intangible dimensions and is 'clothes free' (Ranzo & Scarpitti, 2020), insofar as immateriality is condensed into matter and vice versa (Fiorani, 2006).

This contribution aims to demonstrate how the *RHITA* project, in its development, does not implement a simple incremental innovation of the fashion contemporary system, but rather a structural rethinking of it, based on an idea of expanded materiality: a condition in which the tangible and the intangible, the physical and the digital, the organic and the computational cease to be separate domains and become fields of intra-action. (Barad, 2007).

## **THE EXPANDED MATERIALITY OF FASHION, TOWARDS AN AGENTIAL REALISM**

To clarify the meaning of expanded material culture, this paragraph explores the role of matter in fashion from two fundamental theoretical positions:

- matter as a vital and unitary principle beyond the dualism between active and passive matter;
- the neo-materialist perspective as a strategic approach to project ecology.

Through the set of reflections and practices that the *RHITA* project has implemented, it is possible to glimpse a concept of expanded materiality which, from a theoretical point of view, starts from Baruch Spinoza's immanentist materialism and arrives at Karen Barad's agential realism.

In Spinoza, reality is conceived as a single infinite substance in which mind and body are not two separate entities, but two attributes of the same ontological reality. This monism dissolves Cartesian dualism and opens up an understanding of matter as a dynamic, relational process, continuously traversed by regenerative flows. According to a relational and non-substantialist conception of existence, every entity, whether living or non-living, human or non-human, is defined by its capacity to affect and be affected (Spinoza, 1677/1996), that is,

to act on or be acted upon by others. In the current context, Spinoza's vision seems to anticipate the intertwining of contemporary philosophical currents such as post-anthropocentrism (Ferrando, 2016), neomaterialism (Braidotti, 2019) and agential realism (Barad, 2007), opening up matter to new perspectives and manipulations, towards a more conscious ecological transformation.

On the one hand, therefore, the refocusing of matter, understood as an indissoluble and at the same time plural entity, affirms how human and non-human agents (Jaque et al, 2019) reverberate within objects and processes, assuming the role of active and participating presences (Bennett, 2010). On the other hand, a vision of matter conceived as energy, corpuscular life, vibrations and interrelationships emerges, which is perfectly consistent with the latest theories of quantum physics.

If we apply these considerations on materiality to the contemporary fashion industry, every artefact or design practice interacts with multiple factors that contribute to its final configuration, in dialogue with the surrounding environment. These agents, in turn, are absorbed and contribute to the continuous exchange between energies, vibrant materiality and changes of state. Through a relational view of physical reality (Rovelli, 2014), the organic-artificial and physical-digital dualities are overcome by a multidimensional conception of matter that transcends traditional dichotomies.

In relation to this, Barad's agential realism radicalises this position of relationality and replaces the concept of simple inter-action with that of intra-action (Barad, 2007): if inter-action presupposes pre-established entities that enter into a relationship, intra-action implies that entities emerge and are constituted through the relationship itself.

Basing her argument on the principles of mechanical physics, Barad teaches us that matter should not be understood as a 'thing' but as a 'doing', a process of condensation of agency. If we project this concept onto the materiality of fashion design, we see that actors, forces, technologies and materials at a distance constitute and consolidate themselves with each other as phenomena in the making. In short, Barad proposes 'a relational ontology (...) for the production of material bodies' (Barad, 2003/2017), which lends itself well to the fashion-oriented sector and, more generally, to design-oriented creative ecosystems.

The continuous material reconfigurations – visible in the RHITA project, and also more generally in the world of fashion – are therefore the effect of the continuous intra-actions that emerge from the encounter between different agents. From this, we could say that the project is no longer an imposition of a human form on a non-human materiality, but rather an encounter halfway between the two. The transition from an idea of inter-action to an idea of intra-action is a substantial point, and is also supported by some practices activated by the RHITA project and illustrated at the end of the paragraph.

Starting from Spinozian thought, then moving through neo-materialism, and finally arriving at Barad's theory of agential realism, fashion design can be rethought as an immanent field of forces, in which bodies, processes, geographies, substances and technologies relate to each other, structuring themselves as they are made. On a concrete level, therefore, designers, production infrastructures, places, materials and digital technologies do not exist on separate levels, but take on meaning through unstable, constantly changing assemblages. In line with Rosi Braidotti's post-anthropocentric thinking, the affirmative politics developed by the RHITA project 'combines criticism and creativity in the search for alternative images and projects' (Braidotti, 2014) and 'collectives aimed at affirming (...) hope, rooted in the ordinary micro-practices of everyday life, as strategies for organising, supporting and documenting sustainable transformations' (Braidotti, 2014).

The adoption of a neo-materialist and intra-active perspective, therefore, becomes strategic in steering fashion design towards a deeper ecological co-responsibility for what it imagines and produces. The non-separation between natural and artificial ecosystems, recognising that any substance has a vital principle, capable of acting and allowing itself to be acted upon, leads us to a different perception of the materiality of which a project is made (Ranzo & Scarpitti, 2023).

In relation to the manufacturing symbiosis processes supported by the RHITA ecosystem, for example, post-consumer residues, traditionally considered waste, are reintegrated as innovative resources for uninterrupted cyclicity. The material, therefore, continues to be important even beyond the end of the product's life cycle, metamorphosing into other production cycles for different uses.

The application of agency realism to fashion requires a post-anthropocentric view, insofar as

humans are not the sole creators, but co-agents alongside other entities, both organic and artificial, human and non-human (Ranzo & Scarpitti, 2024). Exploring the materiality of fashion from this perspective, the geographical reference point is not national or European, but planetary, as it is oriented towards everything that happens beyond our individual territories. The scale of the fashion project thus extends from the 'human body' to the 'body-planet'. It is also in this cosmic space that RHITA transcends geographies and arranges practices and projects in a perspective of expanded materiality.

## **DIGITAL AS REVELATION AND “UNVEILING”**

In recent decades, the discourse on digital technology has long oscillated between two extremes: on the one hand, the promise of liberating dematerialisation, and on the other, the denunciation of alienating virtualisation. However, both of these positions appear partial and lacking in a more complete truth. In fact, both points of view share a problematic assumption: the idea that digital technology is an immaterial elsewhere, separate from the concreteness of matter and physical space.

As Timothy Morton reminds us, 'there is no away': there is no *elsewhere* to expel what exists and what we produce. (Morton, 2016). Artefacts – whether material or digital – cannot be projected outside the physical world, because there is no other space outside it. The digital is therefore matter, and the illusion that the digital involves a progressive loss of material consistency is increasingly inadequate. Every digital operation involves physical infrastructure, energy consumption, resource extraction, computational processes and data production, all of which have their own specific material density. In this sense, even the digitisation of the RHITA ecosystem, through its web platform, is physical. The perspective of this contribution is that, through digital technology, RHITA has thickened the materiality of the fashion project, adding layers of information to the results of its research and practices. The fashion artefacts that the project has created do not exist only as tangible entities, but take shape through a set of images, texts, sounds and stories that amplify their field of presence and consistency.

The materiality that emerges is therefore expanded: a hybrid materiality in which the physical and the computational coexist without hierarchies, giving

rise to new regimes of visibility, value and agency. Whether tangible or intangible, the material that the RHITA project reshapes is a flow of information in which physical properties are linked to virtual ones. When we consider the technologies employed in fashion, such as the 2D or 3D digitisation of artefacts, or the use of VR, AR or AI, it is clear that these are not merely digital tools, but rather co-agents of 'reshaping', actively participating in the definition of how an object can be configured or experienced.

In particular, the RHITA ecosystem operates within a circular and transparent design perspective, where nothing is hidden or obscured. On the contrary, the material dimension – including waste or that concealed by digital technology – emerges as the most interesting component to manipulate. The industrial symbiosis developed in the two case studies 'Rethinking Metal Scraps' and 'Contemporary Jewellery from Metal Waste', which work with metal waste, redesigns production chains that are no longer linear but circular or, better, unexpected and rhizomatic networks that come to life through functional connections. In both the project developed by the University of Siena and the one trialled by the University of Campania, the residues produced by metal manufacturing become active resources capable of reconstructing new regenerative cycles for the redesign of sustainable accessories and jewellery.

In both projects, through the use of AI to visualise possible configurations, or through photographic work on metal waste, from micro to macro, the discarded material is given back a great potential for reprocessing to create innovative production chains. In the field of contemporary jewellery (Scarpitti, 2019), in particular, this type of research can lead to unique material and technological innovation, experimentation with new manufacturing processes, and interest in potential circular economies.

Among the material digitisation processes tested in RHITA are the digitisation of historical archives through the redesign and reinterpretation of antique garments, the optimisation of digital modelling with a zero-waste approach, the use of digital passports and AR labels, the use of AI for envisioning and collection building practices, and the development of strategic digital services for garment sharing. These and others are just a few examples of how the RHITA project has expanded the materiality of fashion through digital technology.

In relation to the physical-digital dichotomy,

therefore, the digitisation of matter becomes a device for revealing other qualities of the physical object. From this perspective, digital technology is not simply a tool for bringing matter back to a visual plane, but a way of enriching the artefact with additional elements or relationships that would otherwise be opaque. Digital technology thus contributes to a deeper appreciation of matter: hybrid, transversal and multidimensional.

In *RHITA*'s 3.0 platform, for example, the material dimension of research expands and, by reporting on regional excellence, production narratives and design experiments, focuses on complementary aspects of the fashion supply chain. The territorial structures (section: shape fashion made in Italy), the voices of the best practices interviewed (section: reshape fashion made in Italy) and the experiments carried out (section: *RHITA* projects) reveal a complex creative ecosystem that operates in different ways on the fashion supply chain, balancing sustainability and digital technology. [Fig. 01]

The large amount of data produced by the fashion system has led the *RHITA* project to restore greater transparency and legibility to the processes and practices it has triggered. Claiming for transparent fashion means, in fact, questioning the planned obsolescence of garments, restoring value to every fragment of material used and energy produced, and raising awareness among individuals about what they buy and consume. (Marcadent &

Scarpitti, 2025).

In an expanded materiality framework, digital technology does not dematerialise matter, but rather thickens it, multiplying its levels of knowledge and meaning. In fact, it adds layer upon layer, producing new forms of materiality: images, processes, relationships, data, algorithms. (Hui, 2016).

From this perspective, starting from the four Italian manufacturing regions, the *RHITA* platform promotes local craftsmanship with the aim of promoting it both nationally and globally. The visualisation of the territories' manufacturing excellence, through images and voices, aims to disseminate and expand the tacit knowledge of Made in Italy in order to rediscover new relationships and potential connections. In the *RHITA* project framework, digital technology is therefore not an 'elsewhere' but a physical force that shapes the physical world and, in this sense, could be interpreted through Heidegger's notion of unveiling - *aletheia*: "technology is not simply a means. Technology is a mode of unveiling". (Heidegger, 1954/1991). The unveiling referred to by Martin Heidegger is understood as active energy hidden in nature, which, transformed and reprocessed, becomes the subject of new incessant transformations.

The following four actions summarise the specificities that the *RHITA* fashion ecosystem has attempted to unveil through its digital platform:

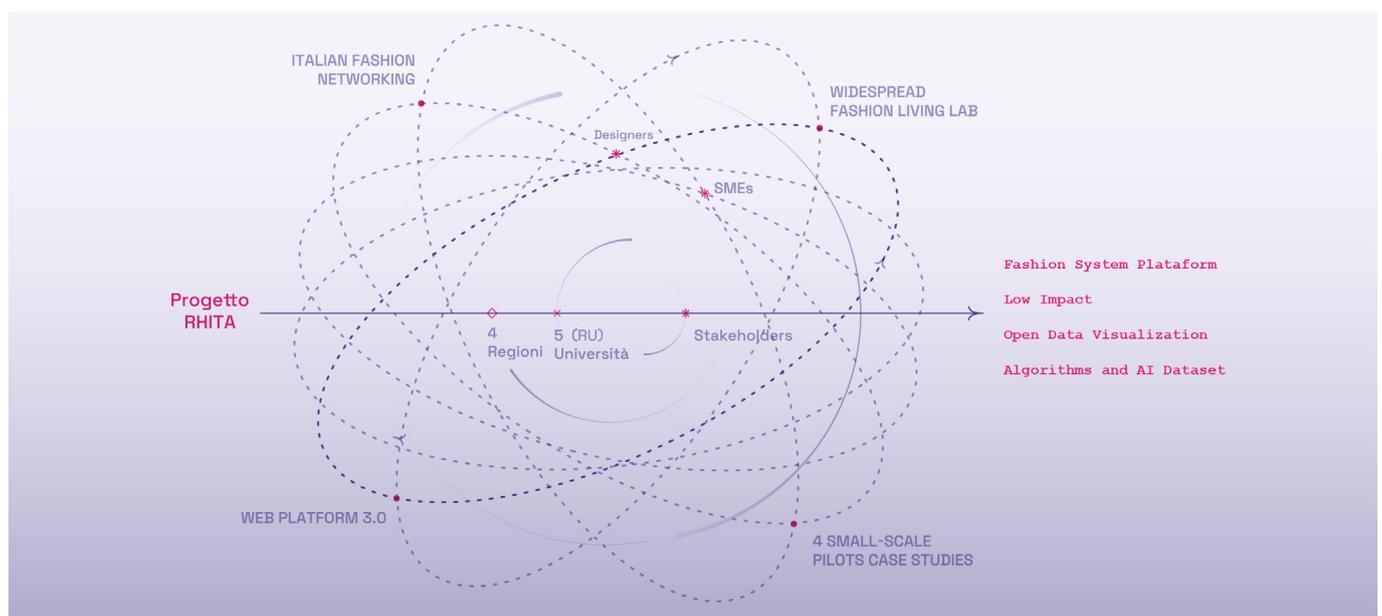


Fig. 01

- *Transparency as a political act*: the project mapped a series of production chains, as well as over three hundred companies of excellence in the four regions involved, systematising knowledge both within and outside the network. The possibility of listening to around ninety audio clips featuring the voices of producers adds greater depth and complexity to the reshaping process.
- *Open consultation*: the platform is open access, implementable and searchable. Through the use of the 'Oracle' section, it responds to users to reveal the geographical locations, data and knowledge gathered from the three mappings conducted (education, production, human capital).
- *Evolutionary trajectories*: RHITA uses digital technology to expand the value chain of contemporary fashion and guide possible design developments in different segments of the supply chain, in accordance with the three guidelines - circular, education and phygital - that filter and motivate the selection of best practices.
- *Material reclamation*: RHITA showcases various fashion-oriented experiences that adopt post-consumer waste to reinvent new supply chains and projects. The waste used includes dead stock garments, fabric scraps, recovered leather, and manufacturing waste from other industrial manufacturers. Looking ahead, the platform also intends to incorporate an energy consumption analysis system that makes explicit the amount of CO2 emitted by the digital system. Compensation

can be rebalanced through the implementation of new circular processes whose actual impact can be verified.

## ENTANGLEMENT AND GRAVITATIONAL FIELDS: THE IMAGINATIVE SCENARIO OF THE RHITA PROJECT

The RHITA project attempts to translate into design operative configurations certain theoretical principles that emerge from quantum physics and can be found in Ferrando's theories of neomaterialism and Barad's agency realism. In this perspective, the RHITA ecosystem is conceived as a complex relational system, constructed through an analogy between its operational network and the functioning of certain phenomena observable in physics, such as entanglement and gravitational fields. This affinity is not merely metaphorical, but becomes a visual design tool capable of guiding new modes of collaboration within the fashion system. This approach is also reflected in RHITA's visual identity project, which echoes the shapes, lines, colours and language of the two physical phenomena. Orbits, masses of dots, directional arrows, tilting planes, particle vortices and moving straight lines make up RHITA's graphic universe. This identity is not only aesthetic but also functional, reflecting on some behaviours of the

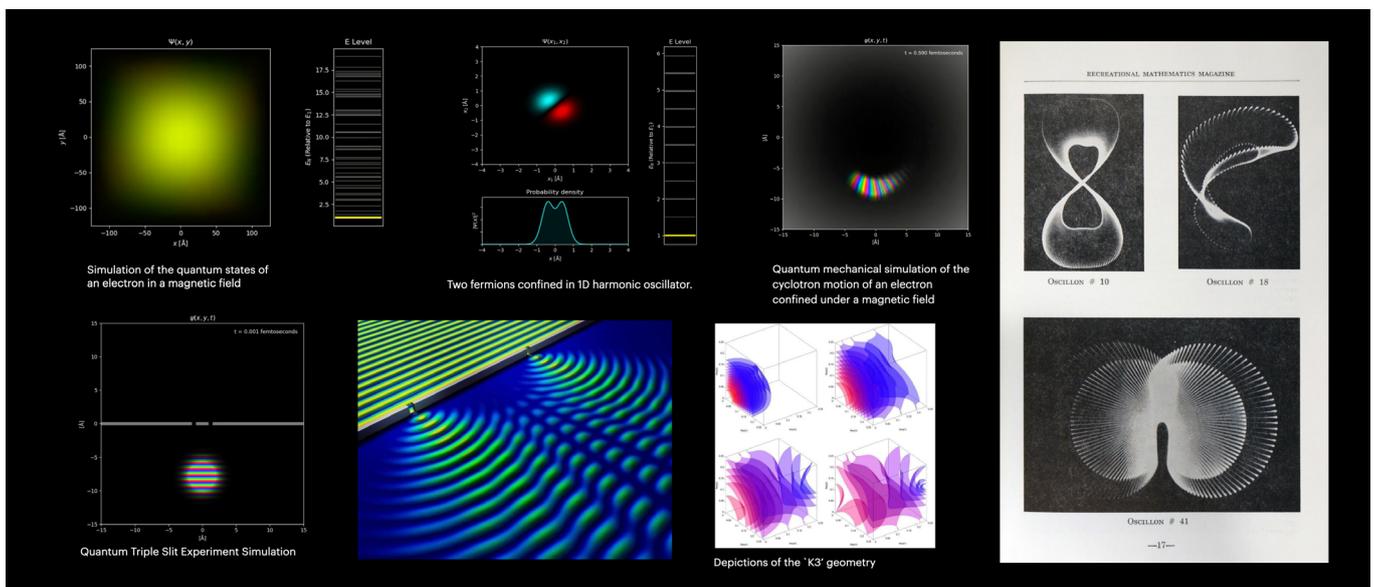


Fig. 02

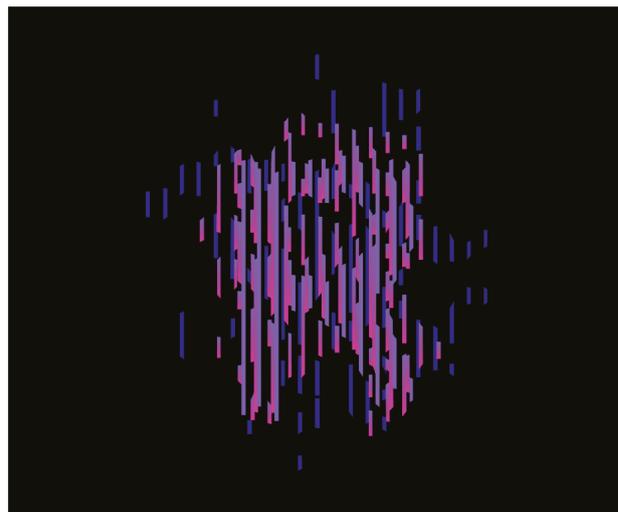
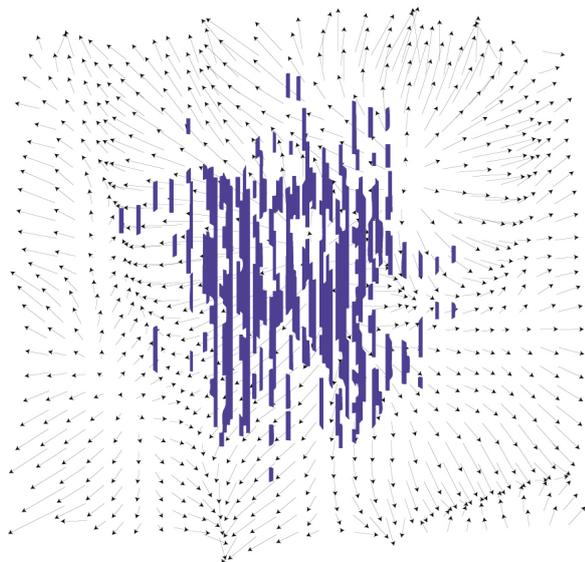


Fig. 03

creative ecosystems [Fig. 02].

A significant example of this translation between theory and design is represented by the project logo, whose development is inspired by the phenomenon of diffraction. In quantum physics, diffraction describes the way in which waves and particles change their trajectory when they encounter an obstacle or a slit, generating an interference pattern. Transposed into the graphic language of RHITA, this logic produces a dynamic logo in which the letter 'R' emerges not as a stable form, but as the result of the superimposition of a linear screen that acts as a dynamic lens capable of bringing the figure to the surface only through movement and interaction between visual layers [Fig. 03].

Within this framework, the concept of entanglement occupies a central position. In quantum physics, it refers to the phenomenon whereby two particles can be instantly correlated even when separated by great distances. In the context of the RHITA project, this concept is taken as an operational metaphor to describe a structural condition of co-implication between actors, materials, technologies and infrastructures. "There are several material-discursive forces – including some that are labelled as social, cultural, biological, geopolitical (...) – that can play an important role in particular interrelated (entangled) processes of materialisation." (Barad, 2007).

As stated by Barad's agency realism, entanglement describes a reality in which entities do not precede relationships, but emerge through specific intra-active configurations. Through the fashion-oriented practices explored by the project, the phenomenon of entanglement is symbolically reflected in a vision where actors, production chains, environments and resources are intrinsically connected and potentially related, even if at a distance. On a practical level, this paradigm implies that subjectivity, supply chains, digital tools, contexts and materials cannot be separate entities, but are phenomena that co-constitute each other and acquire meaning in relation to each other. In this sense, entanglement is taken up by *RHITA* as an operational mode of encounter capable of replacing linear and defined production models with more open, distributed and potentially unpredictable collaborative configurations.

The project's digital infrastructure, which coincides with the web platform, translates this relational vision into a shared operating environment. To promote the reshaping of production chains towards forms of sustainable and technological innovation, the five research units collaborated on the design and parallel testing of multiple practices, encouraging sustainable and technological experimentation from multiple perspectives. The *RHITA* web platform is part of a dynamic and responsive domain which can be updated in real time by the entire network. Acting as a shared

observatory, during the project, various activities were carried out to test the platform and evaluate its effectiveness. These activities promoted co-creation processes and the direct involvement of different types of users, including fashion course students and regional stakeholders. This ensured their direct involvement in the co-creation processes. These meetings verified that the digital ecosystem could support experimentation processes and trigger new intersections, connections, and unusual possibilities for inter-activity.

Alongside the concept of entanglement, RHITA uses the metaphor of the gravitational field to describe the dynamic structure of the fashion system. In physics, a gravitational field represents a continuous space within which bodies with mass exert a mutual force of attraction, modifying the curvature of the surrounding space. Similarly, the fashion system can be interpreted as a distributed relational field in which actors, institutions, businesses and creative communities act as poles of attraction with different symbolic and economic densities. As a dynamic space where each actor influences the others, there are forces in the fashion system, some stronger than others, that act as attractors, determining curves, trajectories, instabilities, dynamics of centrality and periphery, and relationships between nodes of different mass and specific power.

Within this field, the five partner universities involved in the project and the companies involved function as masses with high symbolic density, capable of influencing the cultural and productive trajectories of the system. Fashion students, the most external stakeholders, tend to orbit around these poles of attraction, as do fashion enthusiasts, generating a catalysis towards these new practices. The structure of the field is not static. The symbolic analogy between the fashion system and gravitational fields not only describes an existing physical topology, but also allows us to imagine possible reconfigurations of the field. The reshaping carried out by RHITA is aimed at increasing the 'specific mass' of very small and medium-sized fashion design companies dedicated to sustainability and technological innovation, transforming them into global attractors for conscious innovation. In the same way, it also restores value to consumers who orient their purchasing behaviour towards green and recycling practices. Furthermore, digital connectivity eliminates physical proximity, usually understood as necessary, and makes it possible for 'micro fields'

of force to exist that are capable of competing symbolically with large centres, even at a distance. The concept of a distributed field of forces also emerges within the web platform through the 'Oracle' section, which features interaction assisted by artificial intelligence systems. This tool allows external users to query the body of research developed in the project, facilitating the sharing of scientific work with students, SMEs, stakeholders and communities of enthusiasts. Building this knowledge base required selecting, organising and curating the data produced during the project, turning the platform into a dynamic archive of constantly evolving knowledge and practices.

Balancing sustainability and technology, RHITA showcases a variety of design approaches, promoting a non-protectionist vision of Made in Italy that is part of global creative exchange circuits. In this scenario, by deconstructing the anthropocentric principle, fashion emerges as the result of heterogeneous assemblages (Haraway, 2016) involving human and non-human actors, materials, production processes and digital technologies. As Francesca Ferrando observes, "the human presents itself as a network of energies, alliances, materials and perspectives, connected to every other form of existence through (an indefinite number of) material synergies, in relation to various and possible quantum dimensions" (Ferrando, 2016).

Applying this vision to the role of the designer in the fashion system radically transforms it, as design responsibility extends to managing long-term consequences, protecting ecosystems and establishing ethical models of coexistence and care. Embodied in a material network, this involves recognising ourselves as attractive and transient nodes in the planet's metabolism, and accepting responsibility for the relationships we help to weave.

On a design level, the twelve fashion-oriented practices developed by the five research units have combined sustainability and digitality, involving fashion students from bachelor's and master's degree courses at various universities, guiding them towards more sustainable behaviour throughout the entire production chain and in dialogue with companies [Fig. 04].

Sustainability is represented here not only as an alternative model but also as a systemic friction. The criterion of sustainability is not just a goal to be achieved but becomes an internal disturbance that slows down the system: through projects

such as ‘Yamamay Reloaded’ – precisely because it is applied to a fast fashion supply chain – the principle of circularity acts as a disruptive force that introduces a change of governance in the accelerationist, extractive and performative logic of the fashion system. In this sense, sustainability does not coincide with pure efficiency, but with the suspension of a previous operating system, and acts as a critical device to slow down production flows and expose the material, energy and social costs that the capitalist system tends to conceal. As the RHITA project demonstrates, the fashion system should not be understood as a set of isolated objects, but as a field of intra-active forces in which materials, technologies and bodies come together. In line with Fletcher's view, sustainability requires a systemic approach: “sustainable fashion requires an approach that considers materials, production, use and disposal together” (Fletcher, 2014), thus transforming each element into a co-agent responsible for building resilient fashion ecosystems.

According to the notion of limits defined by the economist Serge Latouche (Latouche, 2012), thinking of sustainability as a disruptive stimulus means recognising its inherently conflictual nature. By deviating from dominant models, these approaches open up alternative trajectories based

on care, invention, individual responsibility and conscious reduction of the superfluous.

## CONCLUSIONS – TOWARDS A MANIFESTO FOR INTRA-ACTIVE FASHION

One of the main findings of this study is that the RHITA project can be analysed as an experimental ecosystem of evolving fashion practices, providing a structural and theoretical rethink of the fashion system.

Through analysing the project, the essay presents a vision of the fashion system as a field comprising heterogeneous forces and connections between materials, individuals, technologies, processes, and geographies. In this field, none of these agents is central, and no trajectory is predetermined; instead, dynamics emerge from attractions, tensions and instabilities that propagate throughout the system. Fashion thus becomes a dynamic environment and a relational ecosystem, in which forms are activated through intra-action rather than imposed.

Concerning the project’s sustainability criterion, the design experiments conducted at RHITA embrace sustainability not only as an optimisation of the current fashion system, but also and above all as a form of friction within the system — a recognition

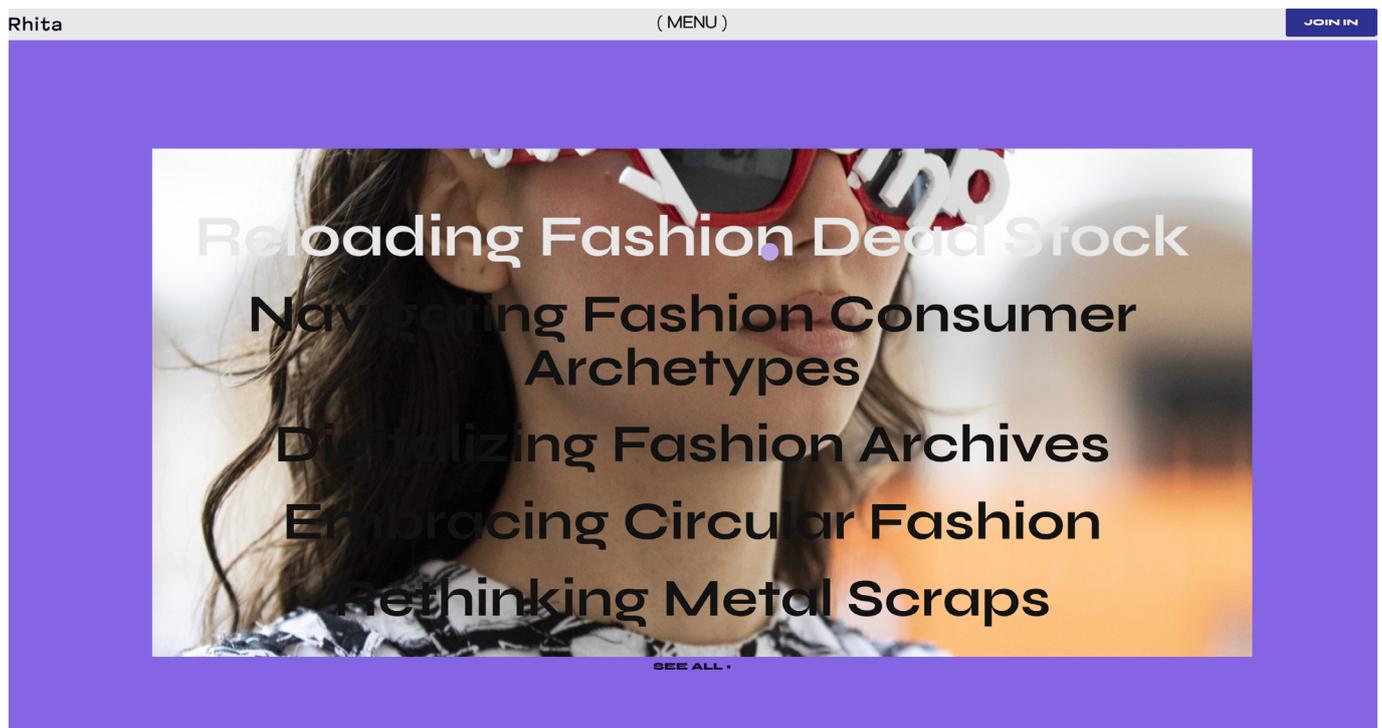


Fig. 04

of the planet's limits and its finite resources. Starting from the theoretical reflections outlined and the fashion-oriented practices experimented with, it is clear that the RHITA ecosystem envisages a future for fashion that does not lie in indiscriminate acceleration, but in the ability to critically observe reality, slow down and reorient flows.

The project's distinctive materiality also dissolves the traditional distinctions between the physical and digital, the human and non-human, and the tangible and intangible. It is no longer attributable to distinct domains, but emerges as an evolving network of interactive relationships. If fashion is understood as an intra-active field of forces, the digital can only be understood as one way in which this field is articulated and densified, on a par with physical matter.

As a summary of the paradigm shift achieved by the project, here are ten points for intra-active fashion:

1. *Italian fashion transcends geography.*
2. *Made in Italy is relational.*
3. *Sustainability as an existential condition.*
4. *The fashion product is an unstable assemblage.*
5. *Every fashion product has physical and digital states.*
6. *Materials are co-agents.*
7. *Digital is material.*
8. *Circularity is an uninterrupted flow.*
9. *Efficiency means taking care.*
10. *Intra-action instead of inter-action.*

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## CAPTIONS

[Fig. 01] RHITA Ecosystem: a summary graph showing the network's constituent actors.

[Fig. 02] RHITA visual identity inspiration board: Credits Pluff Studio.

[Fig. 03] RHITA project dynamic logotype. Photo credits sx: Chiara Scarpitti and Giulia Scalera. Photo credits dx: Pluff Studio.

[Fig. 04] RHITA. ResHaping made in ITALy web platform | RHITA Projects: <https://www.rhita.eu/rhita-projects/>

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