

The Graduate Center
The City University of New York

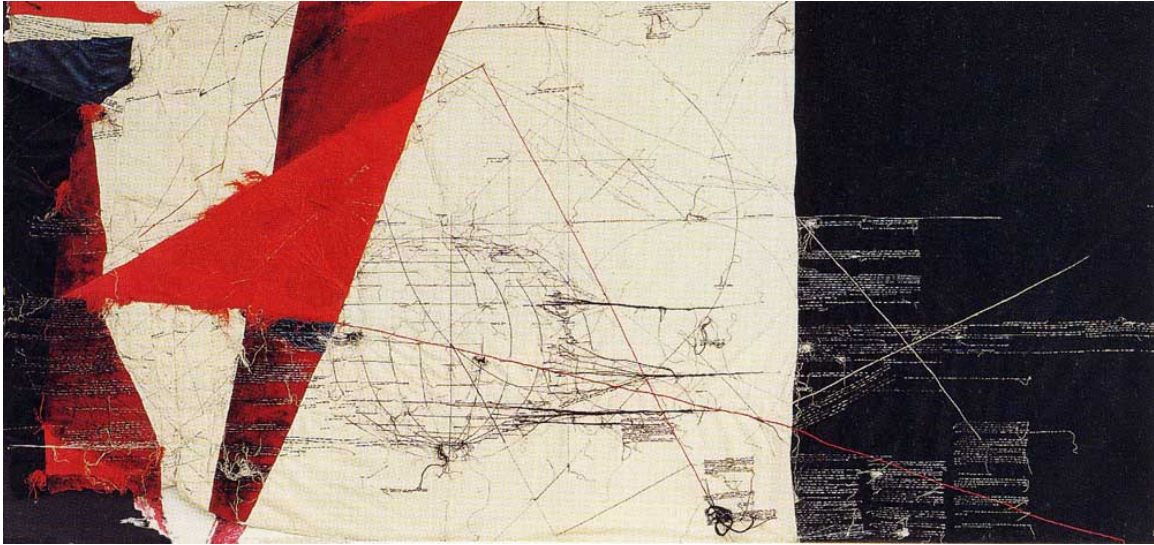
**Empower, Sustain, Change,
Repeat.**
Special Topics in Fashion Studies
MALIS 71300/Cross-listed with WSCP 81000

W/6:30-8:30/Room 5383

Instructor: Prof. Eugenia Paulicelli
Office hours: W: 5:00-6:00 or by appointment
(Office in Comparative Literature Room # 4116-11)
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*Fashion is not linked to such and such a particular form of
clothing but rather is exclusively a question of rhythm, a
question of rate in time.*

Roland Barthes



Maria Lai, *Geografie*

Course Description

Human labor, especially women's, is still today an integral part of the supply chain. In the last few years, women's labor, the driving force behind fashion, clothing and textile since classical antiquity, has come to the fore as an element of disruption in the fashion industry in a variety of ways. Women have elaborated alternative modes of production and consumption based on new understandings of the process and the cost of labor.

Against this background, the course will focus on key words and concepts around which readings and research will be organized: **fashion, space and globalization; fashion, time and its relation to the notion of rhythm; craft, labor, and the art of making.**

The course will be divided into six sections:

In the first, we will read the latest book by Dana Thomas, *Fashionopolis. The Price of Fast Fashion and the Future of Clothes*. In the second section we will interrogate the meanings and the history of craftsmanship with Richard Sennet's *The Craftsman*;

In the third section, concentrating on the work of Roland Barthes, we will focus on the relationship between fashion and temporality, specifically on the notion of rhythm.

In the fourth part, we will read *Cotton* by Giorgio Riello, to see how cotton is a lens through which we can not only trace a global history of a fabric that has been the foundation of the modern world, but also address questions of time and space in the process of globalization and its long history.

In the fifth section, we will focus on labor in a globalized world of new geopolitical contexts. On March 4th, a panel focused on labor will take place at the Pratt Institute. Our class will meet there, so attendance is required. . On March 18th, we will have a class visit by Amy Hall, Vice President of Sustainability at Eileen Fisher and on March 19th, a panel will be held at the Graduate Center, on “Sustainable Thinking in Practice. ”

The sixth part of the course will be dedicated to an exploration of the role of arts and culture and their connections to the fashion industry. We will read the work of David Harvey on time/space relationships in the postmodern age, on the role of cities, and on other artistic experiments that foster change, awareness, and community building as well as art historian and critic David Joselit, *After Art*. . We will give special attention to the artist Maria Lai and other Italian artists involved in the Arte Povera and other artistic movements. We will host a guest speaker, the art historian and curator Francesco Guzzetti, a former fellow of Magazzino Italian Art and now at The Morgan Library.

The course will also examine initiatives that highlight alternative ways of production and initiatives around the arts and sustainability in the fashion industry at large.

This class is a further development of the Fabric of Cultures Project: (fabricofcultures.qc.cuny.edu.) This semester’s class will further contribute to the development of the platform.

Required Texts:

Dana Thomas, *Fashionopolis. The Price of Fast Fashion and the Future of Clothes*, New York: Penguin, 2019.

Richard Sennett, *The Craftsman*, New haven – London: Yale University Press (PDF on Blackboard)

Giorgio Riello, *Cotton. The Fabric that made the Modern World*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015 (paperback edition)

Additional materials will be posted on Blackboard.

Requirements:

6 Short papers (one page) + a case study assigned or chosen individually in which students will focus on and describe the work of a brand, a designer, or a coop. The case study must describe the work of the brand, etc.; , the approach taken to issues of sustainable practices and labor, how the brand describes itself; what kind of products they produce and sell, who is the target audience; price range, results. Examples of case studies: Luxury brands and conglomerates--Gucci/Kering; Fendi

or Louis Vuitton LVMH; Salvatore Ferragamo; Stella McCartney; Maria Cornejo; Custom Collaborative (based in Harlem NY); Marianne Fassler; Tiziano Guardini; Antonio Marras, Jussara Lee, etc.

The short papers will focus on students' reflections on the readings and will feature a prompt written by the teacher.

Presentations on readings: for each class one student should be responsible for leading the discussion and posing questions. This should take about 10 minutes.

Final Paper/Project: The final paper, about 15 pages including notes and bibliography, can be based on the case study or on any one of the short papers written for the class; or on a topic that must receive prior assent from the instructor.

Students are required to present a one page outline about their research topic including bibliography by the end of March.

PLEASE NOTE THAT A SELECTION OF MATERIAL PRODUCED BY STUDENTS WILL BE SELECTED FOR PUBLICATION ON THE FABRIC OF CULTURES SITE.

Learning Objectives:

Students at the end of the course should:

1. **Be cognizant** of the mechanisms regulating fashion as an industry and a symbolic force that is both local and global and its implications on gender, class and race;
2. **Be able to understand** the connections between clothes, fabrics and their impact on society and the environment in a broader historical context ;
3. **Connect their knowledge** of the case studies presented in the class to larger historical and philosophical issues;
4. **Critically examine clothing and fashion** in the larger geopolitical context and in different historical epochs;

Grading Scale:

Attendance and in Class Participation: 10%

Short papers and case study: 50 %

Final Projects: 40%

Week 1 SECTION 1

a) Fast Fashion Mapping

January 29

Introduction to the course – Structure and methods of the course

Readings: Introduction, *Fashionopolis* (Thomas)

Week 2

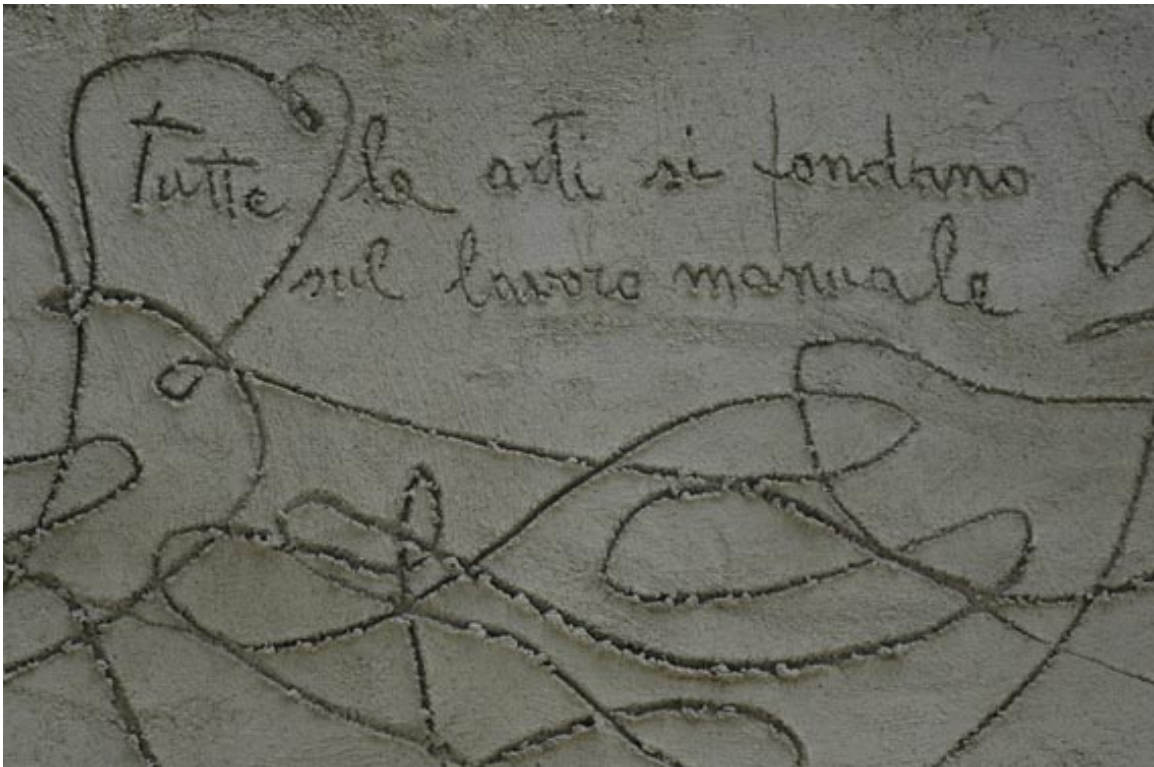
Feb. 5

Readings: *Fashionopolis*, “Ready to wear”; “The Price of Furious Fashion”; “Dirty Laundry”; “Field to Form”; “Rightshoring”; “My Blue Heaven”; “We Can Work it out”; “Around and Around we go”; “Rage against the Machine”; “To Buy or not to Buy.”

Please note that on February 12th the college is closed/ First One page short paper on *Fashionopolis* due

SECTION 2

The Art of Making and the meanings of Craftsmanship



Maria Lai, All the Arts are based on Manual Labor

Week 3

February 19

Readings: Richard Sennett, *The Craftsman*; "Prologue: Man as His Own Maker"; Part One/ Craftsmen: "The Troubled Craftsman"; "The Workshop"; "Machines"; "Material Consciousness"; pp.1-148

Week 4

February 26

Readings: R. Sennett, *The Craftsman*; Part Two: Craft/ "The Hand"; "Expressive Instructions"; "Arousing Tools"; "Resistance and ambiguity";/ Part Three: Craftsmanship; "Quality-driven Work"; "Ability"; "Conclusion: The Philosophical Workshop." pp.149-296.

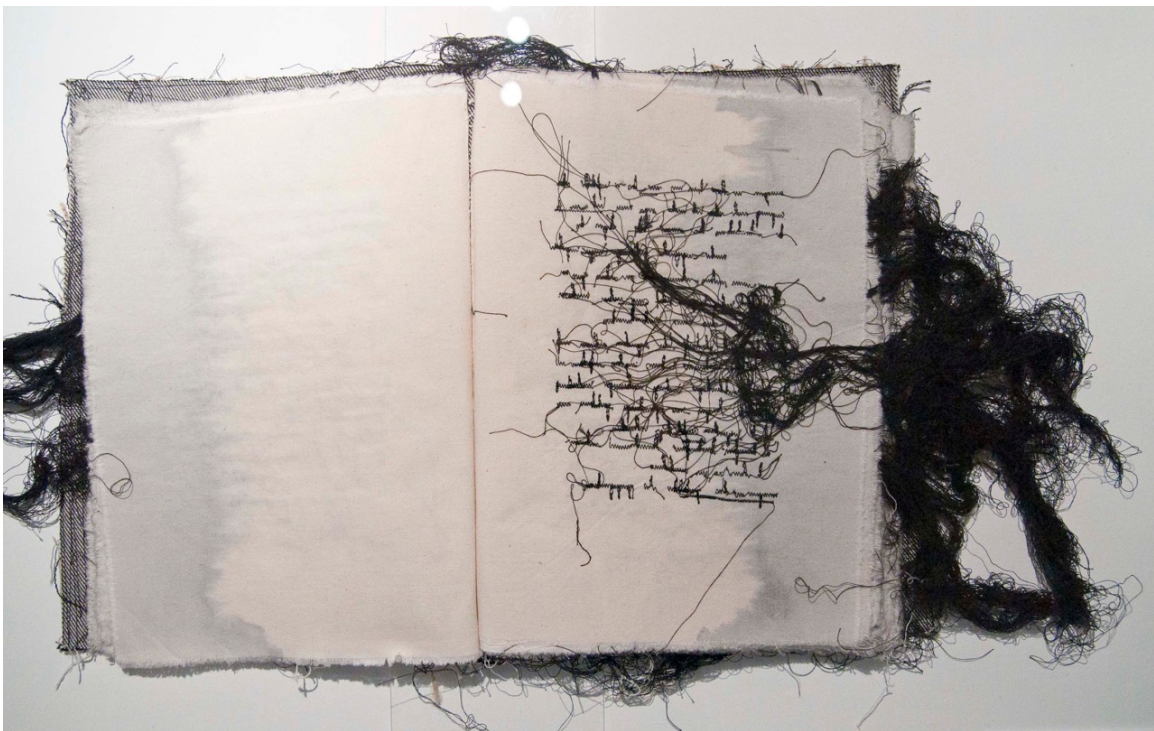
Short paper 2 on *The Craftsman*, due

Week 5

SECTION 3

Fashion Theory: Time and Rhythm

Notes for research



Maria Lai, Libri cuciti (Sewn books)

March 4th

Readings: R. Barthes, Roland Barthes. *The Language of Fashion*, Berg: 2006. "History and Sociology of Clothing: Some Methodological Observations" pp. 3-20; "Language and Clothing" pp. 21-32; "Blue is in Fashion This Year: A Note on Research," pp.41-58; "Fashion and the Social Sciences," pp. 91-97; "Fashion, a Strategy of Desire: Round Table Discussion," pp. 86-90.

Week 6
March 11

Readings: Barthes, *The Fashion System*, University of California Press: 1990, pp. 225-300; From **Part II. The Rhetorical System. "The Analysis of the Rhetorical System:** Points of analysis of the rhetorical system; the rhetorical signifier: fashion writing; the rhetorical signified: the ideology of fashion"/**Rhetoric of the signifier:** the Poetics of Clothing: Poetics; The Rhetorical Signified of Clothing: the Models; Rhetoric and Society"/**Rhetoric of the Signified: The World of Fashion:** The Representation of the World; Functions and Situations; **Essences and Models;** The Woman of fashion/**Rhetoric of the Sign: The Reasons of Fashion:** "The Rhetorical Transformation of the Fashion Sign; A Ensembles: the Function Sign; B Ensembles: the Law of Fashion; Rhetoric and Tense/ **Conclusion- *Economy of the System:*** Originality of the Fashion System; A Ensembles: Alienation and Utopia; B Ensembles: the Disappointment of Meaning; The Double System of Fashion; The Analyst Confronts the System. **Appendixes:** history and diacrony of fashion; fashion photography.

PLATFORM ON THE STUDY OF RHYTHM:

(<https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/#search/PASCAL/FMfcgxwGCbFjlPSVGdktPgjGrRTsBgKn>)

Short paper 3, due

Week 7
March 18th

**SECTION 4: a) Fashion, Globalization, Material Culture &
b) Labor and Globalization**



Maria Lai, Detail installation

Readings: Giorgio Riello, *Cotton. The Fabric that Made Modern World*.

“Introduction. Global Cotton and Global history”; Part 1. The First Cotton

Revolution: A Centrifugal System circa 1000-1500”; Selling the world: India and the Old cotton system”; “Wool growing on wild trees: the global reach of cotton”;

“The world’s best: Cotton manufacturing and the advantage of India”; **Part 2.**

Learning and connecting: Making cottons global, circa 1500-1750”; “The Indian Apprenticeship: Europeans trading in Indian cottons”; “New consuming habits: how cottons entered European houses and wardrobes”; “From Asia to America: cottons in the Atlantic world”; “Learning and substituting: printing cotton textiles in Europe,” pp. 1-160

Guest visitor: Amy Hall, Vice President Social Consciousness, Eileen Fisher

March 19th

This is also a make-up class to cover the instructor’s absence on April 29th



M. Pistoletto, 92

Sustainable Thinking in Practice: The Fashion Industry, Labor, Immigration

CUNY Graduate Center,
Skylight Room, 9th Floor

6:00-8:00

Organized by Eugenia Paulicelli and Deepsikha Chatterjee

This event features panelists who will discuss sustainability, women's labor and immigration and current projects in New York. This panel is organized in conjunction with classes taught at the CUNY Graduate Center and Hunter College and will be open to the wider CUNY community to raise awareness about sustainable practices within educational institutions, in personal consumption, in creative practice, and investigate methods for further research and scholarship. Conducted by Professors Eugenia Paulicelli of The Graduate Center and Queens College, Director of the Fabric of Cultures Project and Deepsikha Chatterjee of Hunter College, the event is open to students in Theatre, Cinema, MALS Fashion Studies as well as the general public interested in ethical production, consumption, and globalization.



Speakers:

Chiara Colombi, Associate Professor of Design, Milan Politecnico, Italy. Co-founder of the platform Fashion in Process – Design Research for Culture Intensive Industries:
<http://www.fashioninprocess.com/the-collective>

Ngozi Okaro, Executive Director of Custom Collaborative

Ngoki Okaro, as Director of Custom Collaborative runs a New York based organization invested in training women of low income and immigrant communities to launch fashion careers and businesses. By teaching standard techniques and ethical business practices of the fashion industry, their participants can achieve secure livelihoods in the fashion industry as designers, entrepreneurs, pattern makers, and seamstresses who create and sell high-quality clothing and accessories.

<https://www.customcollaborative.org/staff>

Sandra Goldmark, Associate Professor of Design a Barnard College and the Director of Sustainability on campus.

Sandra Goldmark has led practical processes of sustainable design in theatre in the theatre department at Barnard College and on the wider campus. She had published on

this issue in *Theatre Design and Technology* and she helps lead the conversation on ethical choices in design with Broadway Green Alliance, USITT and other organizations. <https://barnard.edu/news/barnard-sustainability-director-sandra-goldmark-speak-climate-week-nyc-closing-event>



Eileen Fisher, "Waste no more"

Week 8



Maria Lai, Installation/looms at the Stazione dell'Arte, Ulassai, Sardinia

March 25

Readings: Giorgio Riello, *Cotton, Part III, The Second cotton revolution: a centripetal system, circa 1750-2000*: "Cotton, slavery and plantations in the New World"; "Competing with India: cotton and European industrialisation"; "The Wolf

in sheep's clothing': the potential of cotton"; "Global outcomes: the West and the new cotton system"; "Conclusion: from System to system. From divergence to convergence," pp. 165-288.

Short paper 4 due

SECTION 5

The Arts, Fashion and Culture: From Modernity to Postmodernity



Antonio Marras and Maria Lai

Week 9

April 1st

Guest Speaker: Francesco Guzzetti

Readings:

Artist, Maria Lai, "Holding the sun by the hand," Readings TBA

Week 10

April 7 (Wednesday schedule)

Readings David Joselit, *After Art. Essays on Architecture*, Princeton University Press, 2012.

Suggested visit to Magazzino Italian Art in Cold Spring:

<https://www.magazzino.art/>



Antonio Marras, Detail of skirt with extralong embroidered and painted train, made with male pinstriped vintage trousers, 1991.

Spring Recess

Week 11
April 22

Readings: David Harvey, Excerpts from *The Condition of Postmodernity* (TBA); "The Art of Rent" http://generation-online.org/c/fc_rent1.htm

Week 12
April 29th

No class/Instructor at conferences

Week 13
May 6th

Presentations of students' work and research (case studies and final papers)

Week 14/May 13th

DATE (TBA) : Final Paper and Projects due

CUNY Policy on Academic Integrity

The [CUNY Policy on Academic Integrity](http://www.cuny.edu/about/info/policies/academic-integrity.pdf) (<http://www.cuny.edu/about/info/policies/academic-integrity.pdf>), as adopted by the Board, is available to all students. Academic dishonesty is prohibited in the City University of New York and is punishable by penalties, including failing grades, suspension, and expulsion.

Use of Student Work

All programs in New York State undergo periodic reviews by accreditation agencies. For these purposes, samples of student work are occasionally made available to those professionals conducting the review. Anonymity is assured under these circumstances. If you do not wish to have your work made available for these purposes, please let the professor know before the start of the second class. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

Evaluations

During the final four weeks of the semester, you will be asked to complete an evaluation for this course by filling out a questionnaire.

Selected Textual Resources:

Adamson Glen, ed., *The Craft Reader*, Berg: 2010

Barnard Malcolm, ed., *Fashion Theory. A Reader*, Routledge: 2007

Black Sandy, De La Haye Amy et al. eds., *The Handbook of Fashion Studies*, Bloomsbury Academic: 2013

Craik Jennifer, *Fashion. The Key Concept*, Berg: 2009

Jenss Heike, ed., *Fashion Studies. Research Methods, Sites and Practices*, Bloomsbury Academic : 2016

Paulicelli Eugenia and Clark Hazel eds., *The Fabric of Cultures. Fashion, Identity, Globalization*, Routledge: 2009

Riello Giorgio and McNeill Peter eds., *The Fashion History Reader*, Routledge: 2010

Rivoli Pietra, *The Travels of a T-shirt in the Global Economy: An Economist examines the Markets, Power, and Politics of World Trade*, London: Vintage 2009.

Rocamora Agnès and Smelik Anneke , eds., *Thinking Through Fashion*, I.B. Tauris: 2016

Welters Linda and Lillethun Abby eds., *The Fashion Reader*, Berg: 2011

Catalogue of exhibitions:

Antonelli Paola and Fischer Michelle, *Items. Is Fashion Modern?* Museum of Modern Art, New York 2016

Bolton, Andrew, *Manus X Machina. Fashion in an Age of Technology*, New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2016

Maria Lai, *Tenendo per mano il sole. Holding the sun by the hand*, Rome: MAXXI, 2019.

Ricci Stefania, *Sustainable Thinking*, Museo Salvatore Ferragamo, Florence 2019

ARCHIVAL RESOURCES:

Repository: [The Kheel Center for Labor-Management Documentation and Archives](http://www.ilr.cornell.edu/library/kheel) in the ILR School at Cornell University is the Catherwood Library unit that collects, preserves, and makes accessible special collections documenting the history of the workplace and labor relations. www.ilr.cornell.edu/library/kheel