FASHION AND NEW TECHNOLOGIES:

FROM FASHION FILM TO EXPANDED REALITY - CASTELO BRANCO MODA

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Abstract

One of the ways that the designers and the fashion brands select to present and advertise their new collection to the market, the press and the consumer is through the fashion show.

In a national context, these fashion shows, which can be for the brand or the designer or multi-brand, have very similar formats, however, at the international level, we can find numerously diverse approaches to the aesthetics of the fashion show of a brand or a designer. The use of digital technologies has become an already adopted alternative in some fashion shows of international reference. Digital technologies seek to make the virtual experience of consumers as close as possible to reality, whether in the direct sale of a product or the promotion of an individual product, brand or lifestyle, through a concept or idea. Fashion film, with its more conceptual, independent and bold nature, has been contributing to the diffusion of the border between the virtual and the real and to create unique experiences for the audiences. Thus, it has been gaining a strong presence in the world of fashion and has conquered diverse audiences.

This work presents some examples of international fashion shows that resorted to the use of various applications of digital technologies and, more specifically, the case study of Castelo Branco Moda #19 and the use of audiovisual for the creation of a fashion film outlining the concept and opening of the fashion show.

Keywords Expanded reality, Fashion show, Fashion production, Fashion Film.

Introduction

Fashion Film is a product of cinema that explores fashion in the form of video. It is not a feature film or a short film or an advertising campaign. It is more comprehensive because it follows an idea, a story, or a concept, and it becomes more free and brazen, breaking with cinematic norms.

Today's society is increasingly supported by technologies and, around that fact, the term Media Arts appears to give a name to the various artistic experiences that use technological resources to give rise to the creation of artistic products. These products are also disseminated through the exploitation of the potential of these new technologies (Turola, 2015).

In this context, we find Fashion Film as a very unique videographic language. Fashion films are created by combining various activities related to the technological world and fashion, such as video, cinema, and photography, with the addition of music as a key component in the development of fashion environments.

According to Turola (2015), the launch of ShowStudio by photographer Nick Knight in the year 2000 was a major turning point in the advancement of this form of artistic expression of fashion. The photographer's extensive expertise in making creative photographs for fashion and reproducing a unique movement in each static image contributed to the acceptance of fashion film as a means of expressing and reproducing ideas in the fashion world.

The main goal of this article is to show how important fashion film can be in fashion, in all of its forms, for presenting products on the market or simply presenting ideas, stories, and concepts. The Fashion Show is one of the most effective ways to introduce products or fashion collections on the market, which is why great brands and designers strive to participate in the most important international or national fashion weeks.

Fashion parades can take on various formats, readings, and aesthetics, but the end result is almost always the same. Therefore, it is critical to look for ways to reinvent fashion parade formats, especially in an age where digital reigns supreme and innovations impose themselves as an ever-present presence in this medium.

This article explores the idea of the Castelo Branco Fashion Show, as well as the development of a fashion film designed to create the connection between fashion and all of the show's components while reinforcing a concept that is retained during the event.

History of fashion film and its symbiotic relation with cinema

The fashion film has emerged out of a need to animate a world that was for most of its part represented by static images. Rather than offering static photographs of posed mannequins, as early fashion photography did, film allowed for the depiction of fashion in motion. Throughout the twentieth century, many fashion photographers were interested in the representation of the fashion body as a mobile, dynamic entity, or else injecting movement into static images (Harrison, 1991).

This tendency evolved into fashion film as a more or less well-defined standalone genre by the turn of the century. Digital production and distribution technologies contributed to the vast success of fashion film, and helped create platform such as SHOWstudio in 2000, and gave possibilities to the brands and individual designers to showcase their creation online.

From a conceptual standpoint, fashion films depict a cross-genre lifestyle. Short films created by fashion organizations (e.g., fashion houses, magazines, designers, and filmmakers), circulated online (e.g., on blogs, Vimeo, YouTube), and intended to mediate fashion by focusing on perspectives, narrative,

aesthetics, and "personalities" of garments beyond their physical forms are referred to as fashion film (Soloaga & Guerrero, 2016).

The symbiotic relationship between film and fashion can be traced all the way back to the invention of cinema, which has since then been used as an early vehicle to spread fashion because it was a seductive visual entertainment medium that could be consumed by a large number of people.

Georges Méliès amusing commercial (somewhere between 1898 and 1900) for Mystère Corsets can be considered as one of the early fashion films. The Warner Corset Advertisement at the beginning of the twentieth century and similar examples of the following decades were mostly for ready-to-wear businesses. The Thousand and Second Night from 1911 can possibly the earliest example of a couturier's venture into cinema (Evans, 2011, p. 120). Since 1910, the newsreel which later evolved into cinemagazine took the central role of displaying and promoting the latest fashion. Pathé-Frères and Gaumont were most copious producers of fashion newsreel in France. In the 20s and 30s, there was little evolution in fashion newsreel, which during the second world war continued to flourish but re-purposed for the need of national propagandas (Uhlirova and Bakhit, 2006, p. 66 - 9). Documentary films (such as Making Fashion from 1939) about different behind-the-scenes facets of the fashion industry began to appear in the 1930s. From the early 60s up until the 80s alongside established film directors, fashion photographers (George Hoyningen-Huene, William Klein, Serge Lutens, Richard Avedon, and Helmut Newton, etc.) started extending their interest in producing moving images. The popularity of fashion-related programs created for television audiences grew in the 1980s. Smaller London-based clothing labels including Bella Freud and Vexed Generation made collaborative films (Strap Hanging, 1999; Lady Behave, 2000; Wrap Liberation, 1999) as an alternative to runway conventions in the late 1990s and early 2000s (Ulhirova, 2013). By the turn of the twenty-first-century designers started to

incorporate video projection as a tool of communication in a more earnest way, Alexander McQueen was one of the designers who used film as a "backdrop" in his shows regularly.

Designers' increasing interest in moving images was largely due to technological advancements. The ease of access to digital production methods, combined with the evolution of the fashion show into a theatrical spectacle, multimedia, multisensory experience for the viewer, left a lasting impression of the collection's creative process. SHOWstudio's importance as a proponent of this new fashion-moving-image culture cannot be overstated. Founded by Nick Knight, a fashion photographer, and Peter Saville, a graphic designer, in 2000, this was the first platform to explicitly urge fashion designers to make films as a means of showcasing their collections, as well as to question the filmic means of re-presenting fashion.

Between 2001 and 2008, the fashion film industry grew slowly due to sluggish data speeds, a lack of technological expertise, and even progressive photographers and filmmakers' reluctance to embrace digital workflow, as well as the industry's inability to use the digital media as a key tool for marketing and advertisement. The fashion film began to bloom and claim a greater presence with the release of Prada's film "Trembled Blossoms" in 2008. By the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century, major fashion houses had begun to spend larger sums on fashion films and disseminate them online.

It is worth mentioning the use of fashion film by major brands, such as Burberry, which begins the presentation shows of each seasonal collection with a short film that acts as a framework and reinforcement of the concept or story of the collection. In addition to the initial film, in recent years, they have also used the digital recording of the show where the cinematographic language, the plans, framing, are of great impact for the understanding of the collection.

Miu Miu has also been innovative with the creation of the Women's Tales project, which is the creation of a collection of

short films, started in 2011. The project involves the creation of two short films per year, one for each collection, summer and winter, produced by a director invited by the brand.

The short films made were premiered in 2012 at the Venice International Film Festival, of which Miu Miu has become a sponsor.

Digital fashion film

Fashion has always been an important part of cinema, contributing to the overall aesthetics of films through costume design, but it has only recently become a prefix for the film with the advent of digital culture. In recent years, the interactive interface of the screen of a computer or a smartphone has become a key point of contact to experience the fashion culture. Fashion film has developed as an independent genre on the Internet since the end of the last decade, becoming a unique vehicle for the representation of fashion there.

The rise and spread of digital fashion film as a distinct and recognizable standardized medium of communication have altered the nature of new media fashion. Natalie Khan (2012) has identified it as a new media genre. Fashion film has become a global cultural phenomenon through an increasingly international network of fashion film festivals, as well as online communities and social media platforms. In general, they can be used for promotion of seasonal collections, an alternate for the catwalk display, online look-books, experimental film for brand advertisement, promotion of digital print magazine, online stores, and an artists' video produced by a brand (Needham, 2013).

According to Needham, there are sub-genres of fashion films that can be identified in categories according to the kinds of filmmakers who produce them and the different objectives they aim to achieve For example, "the boutique film" produced for an e-store, "the designer's film" developed by a creative individual or brand, "the authored film" created by a known film

director, and "The Artist's Film," which is a brand-funded feature directed by a well-known artist and therefore intentionally linked to the art world (Needham, 2013).

The fashion film can also be divided into three types: aspirational, in which a high-end product is marketed by popular actresses; emotional, in which an author from a parallel art scene creates a symbolic narrative; and aesthetic, in which creative and synthetic elements take precedence over the narrative (Daz & Garca, 2013).

Through active spectatorship and a constant flow of moving images, digital media provides a break from the past, as traditionally the fashion images have been seen as still. Fashion is now a part of what is known as "permanent presence", meaning that fashion is continually evolving while remaining grounded in the present (Manovich, 2005), thanks to digital fashion films.

Smartphone a versatile tool for filmmaking

The film industry underwent a significant transformation at the end of the twentieth century, shifting from celluloid-based production to digital production, distribution, and online release. The democratization of content production, as well as the affordability, accessibility, and ease of use of digital technology, especially smartphones, has led scholars to believe that anyone can be a filmmaker. Smartphone technology is playing a major role in production, dissemination, and reception as analogue is being replaced by digital. As digital technology advances, these devices have become smaller, lighter, and less expensive, making them more available. It has also become easier to edit and share content using their ability to connect to the internet. Smartphones have become an integral part of our everyday lives and have evolved into extensions of ourselves, making them omnipresent and allowing us to take photos or videos anywhere, at any time.

Between 2005 and 2006, the first film entirely shot on a smartphone was released, but it was the release of the iPhone 4 in

2010, which was capable of shooting HD video, that revolutionized smartphone filmmaking. The availability of a variety of gears for stability, dedicated add-on lenses, and applications like FiLMiC Pro drew the attention of the mainstream industry in subsequent years. In the last five years, smartphones have advanced to the point that they can shoot 4K video, and now the Samsung S20 series, which can capture 8K video, is bringing image quality closer to conventional film aesthetics. Smartphones have become an essential part of the workflow of small and medium production houses all over the world, whether as a primary or secondary camera. Non-fiction films such as *Intelligent Details – Bently; Snowbrawl – Appl; Look at Her Now - Selena Gomez* and *No Love Like Yours - Edward Sharpe and the Magnetic Zeros* are some of the examples of films shot on a smartphone.

Digital technologies and expanded reality

Currently, fashion shows are increasingly merging the presentation of the live collection with other technological / digital areas, expanding the concept of digital and fashion. In this article, this is verified in the case study Castelo Branco Moda # 19, through the convergence of the fashion films projected at the opening of the show with the performance of the mannequin, transforming the performance into an expanded reality (see fig.1). (Carvalho, Pereira & Fernandes-Marcos, 2017)

The fashion industry has, since its inception, focused on innovation in an incessant search to define the fashion of the future. With the emergence of new technologies (the digital age), fashion faces other challenges and new possibilities, both in terms of production and in creation, communication, advertising and commerce. With cyberspace, the fashion image seems to dematerialize and seeks new ways of communicating, through new technological processes, to an increasingly demanding consumer.

The development of media-art and digital technologies allowed the creation of new scenographic spaces that merge real and virtual spaces, making it possible to: strengthen the relationship between artists and the public; eliminate the distance in terms of time and space (Pereira, 2018).

In the mid-twentieth century, the idea of telepresence and the concept of telematic art was born. Shortly afterwards, the so-called "soft sets", virtual spaces and digital images, stood out in the creation of illusory environments. The virtual scenography came to create "new worlds" connected and separated simultaneously. It allowed mixing different media, augmented reality environments and other virtual environments, which could be shared in different locations simultaneously
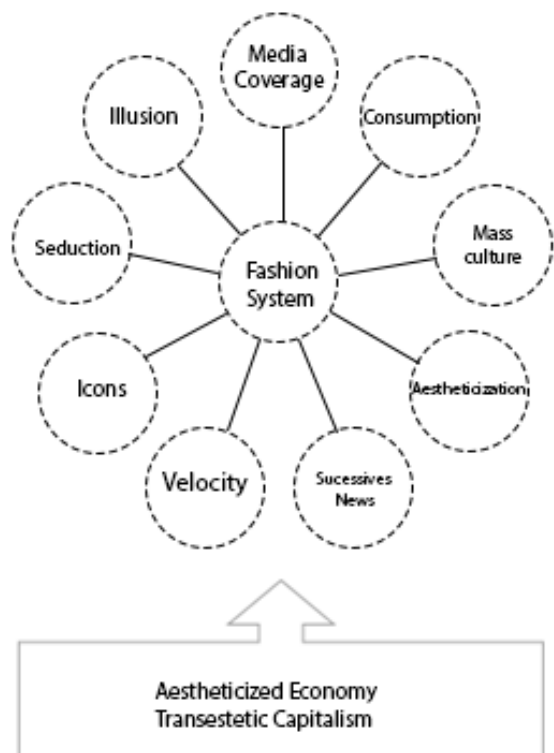

Fig. 1 Explanatory graph of the Expanded Fashion System (Carvalho, Pereira & Fernandes-Marcos, 2017)

(Vogiatzaki & Santorineos, 2011). Technology, art, and theatre have reunited to create an accessible, immersive production in which the audience plays a critical role in the creation of the work of art.

The transversality of the theatrical language in contemporary art is an essential tool in the visual message, in the reflection and the interpretation of current artistic proposals. The metaphors of representation, in their intimate relationship with space, illusion, time, reality or simulacrum offer the viewer this enchanting possibility - trompe-l'oeil - summoning, over time, the means, the modes and the objects.

The emergence of theatricality, in areas tangibly related to the theatre, seems to have as a corollary the end of the limits between genres and the formal differences between practices, from the theatre-dance to the multimedia arts, including happenings, performances and new technologies. The specificity of theatrical language in the theatre is increasingly difficult to define. Suddenly, the theatre shifted to the extent of the spectacular and the theatrical, it ends up acquiring new forms and is itself forced to redefine itself (Feral, 2002).

Castelo Branco Moda #19

Castelo Branco Moda is a project that began in 2016 to enhance and promote Castelo Branco Embroidery.

Professor Alexandra Cruchinho is currently a professor at the Lusófona University oversees production. She is the producer in charge of the Event's entire format, concept, and aesthetics in each year of its execution. Since it is more than a Fashion Show as we know it today, it is referred to as an event.

The creation of this event is the result of a certification process for the Embroidery of Castelo Branco initiated by ADRACES - Association for the Development of Raia Centro Sul, by the Francisco Tavares Proença Júnior Museum, by the

Polytechnic Institute of Castelo Branco and by the Municipality of Castelo Branco, through the creation of the "Ex-Libris" project - Reconverting / Adapting / Certifying the Embroidery of Castelo Branco carried out within the scope of the EQUAL community initiative.

The main goal of this Certification project, which took place between 2005 and 2008, was to "guarantee the preservation of Castelo Branco Embroidery in terms of its genuineness, authenticity, aesthetic, and technical quality" (Rechena, 2007, p. 6). As a result, Castelo Branco reveals that one of the goals of its intervention is to ensure the embroidery production's continuity and quality.

Communication with the fashion professor and producer occurs in this sense, at the same time as she is asked to think of an initiative that blends some innovation with this ancestral practice through Fashion.

The idea is for the implementation of a contest in the field of fashion design in which Castelo Branco Embroidery is used in garments and fashion accessories. This competition is targeted at young fashion designers and students, and its main goal is to introduce them to important aspects of regional identity, specifically Castelo Branco.

The first edition of the contest was held in 2017, and the results were made public in Castelo Branco Moda that year.

Another concept for this innovation plan for Castelo Branco embroidery was realised in 2016, the start date of this event when two renowned national fashion designers were invited to create a piece with embroidery. As a result, it would be possible to empower professionals in the field, as well as those who already have international presences, about the use of Castelo Branco embroidery.

Castelo Branco Moda is thus an event produced to publicly present the results that are obtained, annually, on the one

Fig. 2-4 Ballerina's entry and performance on the catwalk (Neel Naik, 2019)

hand, through the Castelo Branco embroidered contest, and on the other hand, through the proposals of two designers invited in each edition.

The great challenge is to create an event with the same nobility as a piece of Castelo Branco embroidery while maintaining a creative aesthetic and remaining fashion-forward at all times.

In each edition, the Producer had to reconcile, in the same event, very different pictures that passed through end-of-course collections of young fashion designers, finalists of degrees and master's degrees in the area, mini-collections of the invited designers for the creation of pieces with Embroidery, a mini collection of a brand from the region - Dielmar, Portuguese Fashion News Contest, organized by the partner of this event, Associação Selectiva Moda and, finally, the presentation of the proposals of the fashion designers and the finalists of the contest for the Castelo Branco Embroidery.

The challenge was to come up with a concept that would be transversal to all of the collections that would be seen while still creating connections between them so that the show's conductive end and coherence would not be lost. Different methods and aesthetics were considered for each edition, allowing for a logical chain of all presentations. In addition, for each edition, a different space belonging to the municipality, recently rehabilitated or planned to dynamize, was identified to host the show.

In the edition of Castelo Branco Moda #19, we sought to define an aesthetic language that served the objective of unifying the event, establishing a common thread and telling a story throughout the course of the parade. This year the space chosen was the Fábrica da Criatividade space recently rehabilitated and inaugurated. Fábrica da criatividade was a former garment factory, located in the Cansado neighbourhood and today is a co-working space, with conditions of Excellence for the development of a very extensive number of artistic, creative activities, among others.

This connection between space and event becomes significant, as it decides the realization of an idea. The municipality is interested in showing the space to the public, and the show would include a common thread and connection between all parties.

When it comes to framing the aesthetics of an event with a strong fashion aspect, creating a video with the sole purpose of displaying the factory spaces becomes unthinkable. It was crucial that there was a fashion reference included. As a result, a professional ballerina is invited to participate in the show's opening video, and the ballerina's choice of costumes falls on some pieces from the collections of young designers to walk the catwalk. You'd have to go with plain, light pieces that allow the ballerina to move freely. The last item to wear in the ballerina's final journey should be from the first collection to walk the runway. All of the options were interconnected, resulting in the following alignment choices for the show.
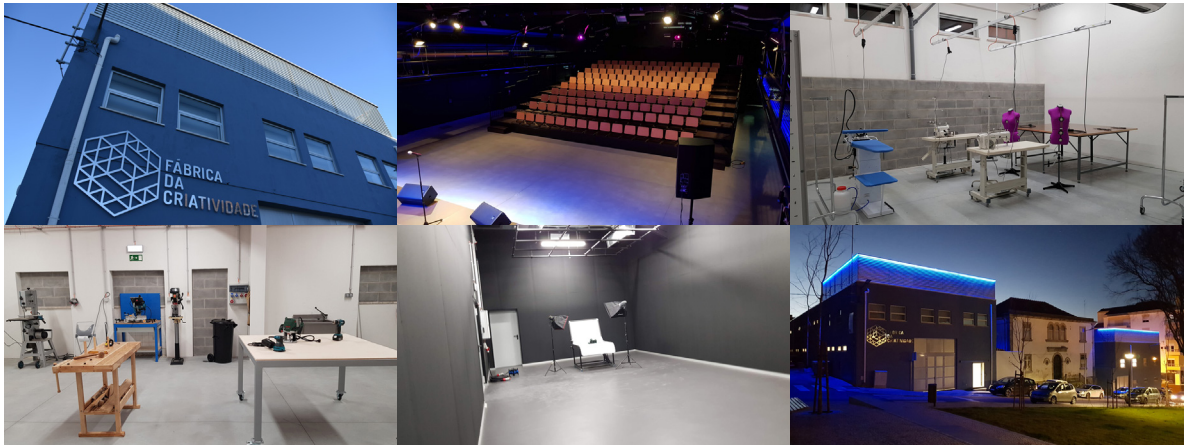
Fig. 5-10 Fábrica da Criatividade (https://www.cm-castelobranco.pt/investidor/fabrica-da-criatividade/)

The spaces to be presented on film were identified and a route was defined that the dancer should go to the last space, the auditorium with the catwalk with about 700 people seated to watch the show.

There should be no cuts between the film and the show because of the connection. The idea was then to end the film with the ballerina opening the backstage door that leads to the catwalk. When the movie ends, the light on the screen goes out and is led to the entrance, where the ballerina from the film enters the catwalk, dressed, exactly as she left the screen (Fig. 2-4).

As a result, between the fashion film and the start of the show, and aesthetic of continuity was created.

The making of a fashion film

Movement, time, rhythm, and metamorphosis are all important elements to look for in a fashion film (Ulhirova, 2013). The similarities between fashion and cinema can be seen in their interest in corporal practices and movement, as well as their depictions of the body in motion that provide visual pleasure.

The main goal of a fashion film is to combine the narrative of the film with the garments it portrays in such a way that the viewer is exposed to both at the same time. It's also crucial to reflect the garments' aesthetic quality in relation to the location where they are filmed.

Next, we'll talk about pivotal decisions taken during the production of the - Castelo Branco Moda 19 - film.

Pre-production

The pre-production consisted of mainly three steps. The first one was the meeting between the Castelo Branco Moda 19 organizing committee and the fashion film production team (Neel Naik and Carlos Reis, professors at ESART, IPCB). This took place a month before the show and a clear brief was given about the show's central theme and venue, which would ultimately play a crucial role in the shaping of this film. The organizing committee stated at the outset that the primary goal of this film would be to highlight a few selected garments from a collection of shortlisted students, with a secondary goal of representing the infrastructure and facilities of the venue "Fábrica da Criatividade".
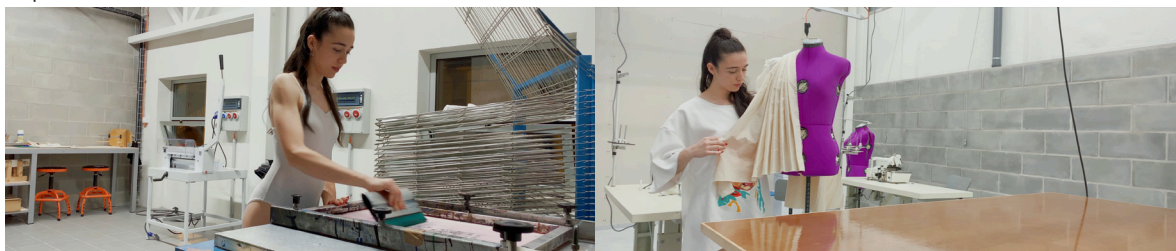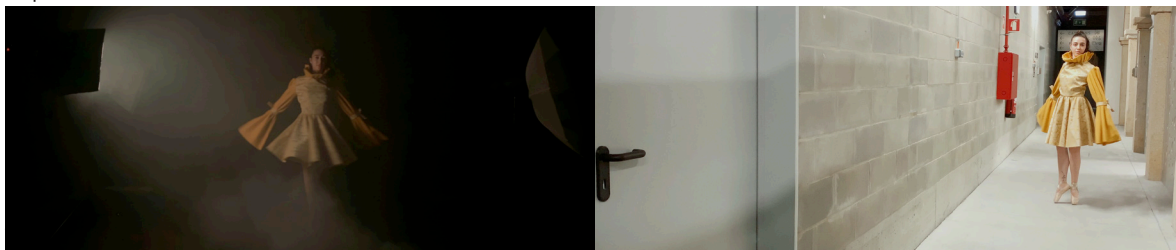
Sequence 1

Sequence 2

Sequence 3

Sequence 4

Sequence 5

Sequence 6

Fig. 11 Stills from sequences (Castelo Branco Moda#19 Fashion Film, Neel Naik, 2019)

The third step was to create and finalize a comprehensive shooting plan, which included creating a storyboard, marking the shooting schedule, and selecting the equipment to be used.

Influenced by the intended narrative, the location of the event and the choice of garments, the film production team decided to approach this film in an experimental avant-garde genre, where the fashion is embedded in the architectural space it is being represented within. The use of fragmented narration of this genre provided us with the ability to foreground style in the same way that art cinema did to limit the personal point of view to focus on subjective experiences.

The garments were defined as the central focus of our narrative, as required by the show organizers briefing, and the spaces in which they were filmed became a secondary storyline highlighting the Fábrica da Creatividade's facilities (e.g. workshops for woods, metals, ceramics, plasters, plastics, silk-screen printing, engraving, textile, photography, video and digital art cowering spaces, offices, studios, backroom and exhibition hall).

To reinforce the narrative, instead of a model, a dancer was chosen to portray the garments.

Structurally the film was designed to be shot in six sequences, each representing one garment and showcasing one or more of the location's amenities. A set of different types of shots, angles and camera movements were predefined (Fig. 11).

The film production team also decided to shoot the film with a smartphone, not only for the experimental nature of the project but also to create a pedagogical study of the process.

Production

In term of narrative, the collaboration of Patrícia Lourenço, a trained ballet and contemporary dancer, and her ability to move gracefully yet subtly through space, contributed greatly to the impact of the garments' presentation during the filming.

In what concerns the equipment used for filming, the iPhone XR was chosen, after a brief examination of the technical aspects of a few smartphones, including lens quality and focal length, the pixel count of the sensor, and bit depth quality of the recording format. The iPhone's 12MP wide-angle camera, with an f/1.8 aperture and inbuilt optical image stabilization, made it an excellent choice for this project. Both still and panoramic shots were taken with a tripod and adaptor for added stability. An app called FilMic Pro was used to achieve maximum dynamic range with a high bit rate and to capture images using Log profile to offer a wide margin for color correction in post-production, thus increasing the creative latitude. This app's ability to control focus and exposure independently, as well as the choice of using a cinematic frame rate like 24 fps and a non-standard aspect ratio of 2.76:1, made it an ideal tool for the film. Some sequences were shot on an additional device in order to record multiple approaches/perspectives to or off the objects being shot.

Long shots, full shots, medium-wide shots, medium shots, and medium close shots were used to help create a cinematic space in which the garments could be portrayed in their entirety as well as in close detail. Thanks to the range of shot sizes used, we were also able to cover the mise-en-scène, either as a foreground or background of each composition, representing the Fábrica da Criatividade as a distinct character in the film. The camera angles used were a low angle, knew height, waist height, shoulder height, eye level and high angle, combined with camera movement such as panoramic, dolly, crane and fixed.

The location was almost monochromatic and featured flat industrial lighting, which proved to be ideal for the garments on display and the genre of film. The flat lighting helped us to create a high key, low contrast look of the film, which is a synonym to high fashion production. During the shoot, no

additional lights were used. This film was shot in six hours, in one evening, after the venue's closing hours.

Post-production

This film was edited with Final Cut Pro, a video editing program. The film production team were able to use the shoot to edit technique because of the meticulous planning of the shot list and a detailed breakdown of the narrative structure of the film. In this method of filmmaking, the shooting is accomplished with the editing process in mind. This aided us in cutting down on editing time and simplifying the process. Multiple shot sizes, camera angles, and camera movement for each scene provided us with the creative space to implement a flow in the editing of the film. The majority of the film uses a simple straight cut technique to transition from one shot to the next and from one sequence to the next, allowing the film to attain an organic flow. One distinguishing characteristic of the conference room sequence is that it uses multiple exposure compositing techniques to simulate a crowded room.

The background music was chosen from a selection of music created specifically for this event by ESART students enrolled in the electronic music production course. The rough cut of the film was edited with the music composed by the student Carlos Monte. To create a smooth visual flow and make the music blend seamlessly with the film, most of the cuts and transitions were in sync with the rhythm of the music. Once the edit was locked, the student was given a final version of the film to make the final mix of the audio track with some slight adjustments depending on the editing decisions.

The color correction was achieved by performing primary and secondary corrections. The primary correction was used to balance the exposure and brightness levels of all the shots, and a secondary correction was used to create a stylized look by applying a film emulsion LUT and skin tone corrections.

Finally, the film was exported in a variety of formats for dissemination on various social media platforms as well as for projection at the start of the fashion show.

The film was shot, edited and directed by Neel Naik with some sequences shot by Carlos Reis, professors of ESART from the area of audiovisual production.

Conclusion

To sum up, the importance of the everlasting bond between fashion and cinema cannot be overstated. It's a connection that dates back almost to the inception of the term fashion, and although cinema dictates fashion, fashion also serves cinema.

Fashion film is a cinematographic or videographic approach to fashion that has the potential to defy all of cinema's established and characteristic norms, either through the independence with which it is associated or through the irreverence that its existence necessitates.

Even if we talk about the realisation of a Fashion Show, which always requires these technologies to make it happen, there has always been a connection between fashion and technology. Fashion and the fashion show gain new realms and meanings as a result of interdisciplinarity. It gives the event/collection a new voice and opens the door to new challenges and hypotheses, both formally and in terms of the public's reaction to the event/collection.

However, it is important to find new formats, new approaches, and new aesthetics for a parade that are distinct from those that have previously been more visible.

Castelo Branco Moda 2019 is a great example of how to create a fashion event that incorporates technology, performance, music, and fashion film while never losing sight of the original goal of showcasing fashion products focusing on the Castle Branco Embroidery theme.

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