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Coworkings as Focal Points for the Development of New Models for a Sustainable Fashion Discourse and Practice

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Keywords

Coworking, Sustainable Fashion, Focal Points.

Abstract

This research explores the theme of social innovation in fashion industry through coworking spaces as focal points to deal with the challenges the fashion industry faces to. Based on a case study, the paper demonstrates that coworkings can act as spaces of convergence, where people who do not know each other can meet and, from there, work together to create new models. The case studied was a fashion coworking space with a focus on sustainable fashion companies called Malha (2017). The results shows that coworkings face practical challenges for their consolidation as focal points, mainly in relation to the construction of a truly collaborative and transparent culture and the financial sustainability of the enterprise itself. The discussion demonstrates that coworkings are more than spaces for sharing resources, they involve values and a culture of their own that, if not reinforced on a daily basis practice, weakens the credibility of the space, making it impossible to act as a focal point. Finally, the article explores the strategic principles for coworking spaces to act as focal points, reducing the ambivalences between the concept and the practice.

1. Social Innovation and Sustainability in the Fashion Industry

In the last 30 years, since the publication of the report “Our Common Future” (WCED, 1987), and especially after the Sustainable Development Goals were established by the United Nations in 2015, the issue of sustainability became an important topic in any discussion regarding product development and the future of the industries. The fashion industry was not left out of the discussion and actually became a hot topic, as we understand that the business model of fashion, as it currently is designed, is inherently unsustainable.

In this context, the slow fashion movement gained strength advocating for “a new set of attitudes and values that can minimize the impacts on society, both with regard to environmental as well as social and economic issues” (Morelli, 2010, p. 2). With the movement, many new brands more aligned with the sustainable goals were created, big part of them being small/medium business.

According to ABIT (Brazilian Association of the Textile and Clothing Industry), in 2015 the Brazilian Textile and Clothing Industry had a turnover of US\$ 39.3 billion and a production of 6.7 billion pieces (clothing, socks, accessories, bed, table and bath). The industry generates 1.5 million direct jobs, and 8 million if we add the indirect jobs and income effect, thus being the second industry that employs the most in Brazil, second only to the food and drinks sector (together). According to data from SEBRAE (2015), a considerable part of the fashion industry in Brazil is of Individual Micro Entrepreneurs (MEI). In 2015 the turnover of this segment corresponded to around 3,5% of the Brazilian gross internal product.

This data shows how important the fashion industry is for the Brazilian economy, just as it is the case in other countries. Therefore, any issue related to it has a major impact on the generation of jobs and income in the country. So, when we discuss sustainability in the fashion industry it is important not to lose sight of the economic dimension, as referred also in the sustainability triple bottom line: environmental, social and economic.

Regarding sustainability, Manzini (2008, p. 2) argues that there is a need for a systemic discontinuity, a break with the current production, consumption and lifestyle patterns, in favor of sustainable thinking. According to the author, sustainability should be a “meta-objective” for everyone, and not a specific area of thought. So, not only from a production perspective but also from the point of the business model itself, of competition, fast consumption and disposal, on which the fashion industry is founded, everything should be re-evaluated and re-designed.

In order to investigate how systemic discontinuities, unfold in practice, this paper chose the case study method. The method starts from a real-life situation to understand and explain complex phenomena (Andrade Martins, 2008, p. 11), as is the phenomena of social innovation towards sustainability that question established paradigms in order to create new models. Also, the information collected can support new research, projects and theories, as we will suggest further in this article.

During the course of the research, we conducted interviews with five people related to the space, both managers and coworkers; analyzed documents available, as websites, me-

dia articles and social media; and observed the routine of the space in two different occasions.

Malha was created in this context of questioning that fashion industry was (and still is) going through. The intention was for it to be a community and a space for small/medium fashion entrepreneurs that shared the ideals of sustainability to work from and to develop their own business and the sustainable fashion industry as a whole in the country.

The ambitious concept called the attention of the media and of many entrepreneurs who wanted to be part of the space and of the movement it was trying to lead. The organization quickly became a reference on the niche of sustainable fashion, and also developed partnerships with big fashion brands that wanted to be connected to these values.

Although the concept was highly accepted and embraced, the practice proved to be challenging and after a series of problems, varying from physical structure issues to accusations of greenwashing, the coworking space was closed. But not before bringing sustainable fashion to the mass media and creating opportunities for collaborations to happen and sustainable brands to solidify their space.

The case of Malha shows that working with sustainable fashion is still a big challenge, and that we have important cultural and economic aspects that must be faced in order for real and viable changes to take place. It is still too common to see nice discourses that don't leave up to the expectations they create themselves, this may be prejudicial to the industry as a whole as it weakens the trust of entrepreneurs and consumers on the possibility of a different system to be created.

However, the case also demonstrates that coworkings have the potential to be a focal point for new solutions to be developed if they adopt a transparent and committed approach in tune with the challenges and eventual limitations they may have.

2. What is a Coworking?

Before being physical spaces, coworkings are a movement. They emerged through a gradual process initiated in the 1990s and in 2005 the first “official” space of its kind was opened. The intention was to create a “third form” of work, which involved “physical proximity and social cooperation in a shared space outside the limits of shared formal employment” (Waters-Lynch et al., 2016, p. 08). The Coworking.org (n.d.) portal explains coworking spaces as follows: “Coworking spaces are about community-building and sustainability. Participants agree to uphold the values set forth by the movement’s founders, as well as interact and share with one another.”

The portal goes on to say that coworkings should have four characteristics: openness, community, collaboration and accessibility. According to Moraes (2018), these characteristics can be defined as:

- **Openness:** system accessibility to interact with other systems and the environment. In the scope of coworkings it is about transparency and ease for exchanges and internal and external interactions.
- **Community:** it is about the people and relationships that are formed within that space.

- **Collaboration:** process where all actors are co-producers of the final result and work actively together to create solutions and generate benefits.
- **Accessibility:** this starts from the idea that who works in a coworking space does it by choice, and that the selection of who should or should not stay in that space must be natural, and not mediated by a process or by individual preconceptions.

Waters-Lynch et al. (2016) differentiate coworkings from the “shared offices” that have existed since the 1960s. Although both operate within a similar business model, renting space at more affordable rates, they present three important distinctions: the profile of the founders of the place (profession, objectives with space, etc.), the centrality in the relationship between residents (information exchanged, they only share the space for financial reasons, etc.) and the very aesthetics of the space (layout of the work environment, incentive to coexistence and exchanges, etc.).

As the coworking space is perceived and respected by the market niche in which it operates, it also gains the public trust to validate the companies and professionals that are part of it, making other professionals more confident in residents and thus facilitating an approach (Waters-Lynch & Potts, 2016). As a result, coworkings become much more than a space for sharing the physical environment and expenses, they act as platforms that connect not only residents, but also external actors that identify with the values upheld by that particular space.

So, we can define coworkings as spaces where you connect with other people, resources and skills in order to generate

value. In this sense, Waters-Lynch and Potts (2016) approach coworkings through the lenses of game theory to say they can act as focal points (Schelling Points), that is, “a solution to a problem of coordination between different parties in the absence of communication”.

In order to be consider a focal point, Waters-Lynch and Potts (2016) establish four criteria:

1. Have a defined and recognized niche, so that interested parties understand what kind of professionals / solutions can be found in that space;
2. Be a type of club, with defined rules, and a series of common resources;
3. To be a space where partnerships, contracts, new ventures, etc. are created, which, once they are better developed, will leave that space to act alone;
4. Have a cost and some level of exclusivity, to generate value, and also differentiate / select the professionals and companies that will be part of the space – this point can be questioned, as the concept of coworking includes the idea of accessibility, as mentioned before.

When the coworking act as a focal point, it brings together business and people with shared values and work as a platform that connect them towards a common objective. The aim of the practice of the coworking as a focal point is not to have always the same residents in the space, but to be a transitional space, where they’ll build partnerships and the necessary structure to grow towards their objective.

Thus, it becomes a fertile space for innovation by giving access to resources and validating small initiatives, thus creating the trust necessary to form partnerships that would not be possible, or at least likely, if the space was not there to facilitate this connection between the different, and unknown, actors.

Manzini (2008) states that the transition to a new, more sustainable social and economic model will occur through a process of continuous learning and systemic discontinuities. Such systemic discontinuities are cases of social innovation, which disrupt paradigms to create new, more sustainable models. Crozier & Friedberg (1993, p. 19 *apud* Edwards-Schachter & Wallace, 2017, p. 12) define social innovation as “a process of collective creation in which the members of a certain collective unit learn, invent and lay out new rules for the social game of collaboration and of conflict or, in a word, a new social practice”.

Having this in sight and considering Waters-Lynch and Potts (2016) vision on coworkings as focal points, it is possible to see them as a fertile space for new ideas and models for a more sustainable fashion industry. So, the coworking is not the innovation on itself, but the space that creates the conditions and provides the resources for them to be developed. As previously mentioned, both the coworkings and social innovations have collaboration as one of their main characteristics. According to Cipolla *et al.* (2015, p. 130), collaboration occurs as all participants become “active co-producers of benefits recognized by all”. The authors also state that collaboration can evolve into relational services, where actors not only have an active role, but also relate and interact in a personal

way, this type of case involves higher levels of trust and intimacy (Cipolla *et al.* 2015; Cipolla & Manzini, 2009).

Therefore, collaboration differs from sharing to the extent that there is active participation and exchange of those involved. Furthermore, collaboration can take place vertically, from an organization (or service provider) with the user, and horizontally, between users or between organizations (Cipolla *et al.* 2015).

As the conceptual basis that guides this paper is defined, we can go on to the analysis of the object of the study.

3. The History of Malha

Malha was defined as a “movement for a fair, sustainable, collaborative, inclusive, local and independent fashion”. On its website, the organization presented itself as follows:

Malha is a platform for the fashion ecosystem that connects creators, entrepreneurs, producers, suppliers and consumers by building sustainable, collaborative, local and independent fashion. For this we provide the means of production and encourage the exchange and creation of knowledge. We are both a coworking and cosewing space, a community, a school and an experimentation laboratory. Here we develop new customer experiences, incubate projects and design the future of fashion (MALHA - Home, 2017).

Malha was located in São Cristóvão neighborhood, in Rio de Janeiro. There was located Malha’s warehouse, “a collaborative space for production, creation, experimentation, and a growth platform for entrepreneurs” (MALHA - Home, 2017). The intention was to create a space that could house and fo-

ment new projects and ideas towards a more sustainable fashion industry – and with that become a focal point, as defined by Schelling (Waters-Lynch & Potts, 2016) for companies and people that shared the same ideals.

When the warehouse first opened its doors the media coverage was significative, and many stated that the space was “an alternative for the future of fashion industry” (Monteiro, 2019).

On an effort to promote collaboration between people/companies that had their spaces at Malha, the architecture of the place was designed to privilege common spaces. It was also common for events (both for residents only and open to the public) to take place there and residents could vote on some proposals on how to manage the space.

But the space faced challenges to translate their ambitious concept into real practices. Even though it was designed to promote collaboration, the warehouse was empty for most of the time. The structure was big and had a high maintenance cost, so the rent prices were not accessible for small/medium companies. Other structural problems were mentioned during the interviews, like the lack of proper air conditioning and unstable Wi-Fi connection.

On top of the structural issues, complaints of lack of transparency and incoherent practices started to appear. One had an especially big repercussion on social media and said that relationships at Malha were not truly collaborative or equal – as the organization would be privileging their own agenda and even creating an in-house brand (AHLMA) that would compete with the entrepreneurs of the space.

In April of 2018, after less than two years Malha’s warehouse was closed. The organization tried to continue in a digital

format, as a community and also as popup stores in shopping centers, but the last project that was advertised by the organization was in November of 2018.

4. Malha as a Focal Point

Going back to the criteria defined by Waters-Lynch and Potts (2016) to characterize a coworking as a focal point, we have four main characteristics: having a niche, a set of defined rules, being a space where partnerships are formed and having a cost or some kind of exclusivity.

Malha had a well-defined and recognized niche. The space focused on the fashion industry, specifically on sustainable brands. This could be perceived from the selection of resident brands, events and the discourse on social networks. For the theory of focal points, this identification is essential to make it clear what can be found in that space.

One aspect that may be questioned in this sense is that, if sustainability should be a meta objective, it should not be seen as a differentiation criteria or a sales argument.

Malha had a set of defined rules, although not so strict. The management was carried out by a dedicated team, and in some moments the coworkers were called to be part of the decision-making process. Like clubs, there were several spaces of common use, such as the kitchen, co-sewing, the photography laboratory and living spaces. Although they are considered a positive thing for the focal point's concept, these things also added to the high maintenance cost – something that goes against the purpose of coworkings and, at the same time, limit the possibility of innovation as it becomes inaccessible to smaller brands with less resources.

However, from the perspective of the focal points in the way proposed by Watters-Lynch and Potts (2016), this exclusivity is positive, as it creates differentiation and value for those who can be part of the space. Also, it creates a feeling of trust for those who seek the services of these companies and professionals, since they are validated by the organization itself as they are allowed to be members of it.

One point in common among the residents was the desire to create something from a higher life purpose (they would emphasize that profit was not their main goal), from coworkers to management it was possible to see that there was a very strong ideological component among everyone who was part of the space. Although it sounds noble, this vision can be problematic if we analyze that one of the issues Malha faced was the high maintenance cost, which translated into rent prices that were not affordable to small business (that were the intended users of the space).

This is in itself one of the contradictions that the fashion industry has to deal with in the path to sustainability. While the discourse tries to separate sustainable fashion from the traditional idea of profit, the economical aspect is still essential for any company to stay in business. So, in some way, both things must coexist while, as Manzini (2008) states, a whole new system is designed.

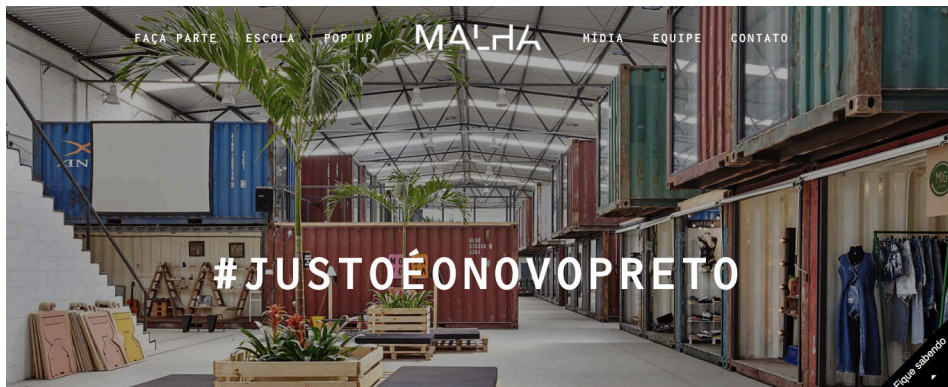
On top of all previously mentioned, the great media coverage that followed the opening of the space also asserted Malha as a leader space for the development of a sustainable fashion industry in Brazil. At the same time that all this attention made the organization a reference for the niche, it also generated great expectations for coworkers and the society which, add-

ed to alleged lack of transparency, made it very susceptible to complains of greenwashing on the first signs of problems. Last, focal points are spaces where partnerships are formed and, in the same way, coworkings imply the existence of a community. Although some specific partnerships were formed there, the lack of movement in the space and distrust caused by the noise between discourse and practice made the early stage community to break away.

5. Theory X Practice – The Challenges for Change

As discussed, the focus on collaboration and sustainability in fashion were the most prominent aspects in the initial phase of the project. That led part of the market to perceive the space as a *salvation*, a place that would provide answers to the problems that the fashion industry faces in recent years (environmental impacts, reports of slave labor, excessive consumption, etc.). As was widely stated in interviews, and reinforced by the materials surveyed, the concept of Malha was inspiring, but the reality proved more challenging than expected.

Although Malha could be considered a focal point as defined by Waters-Lynch and Potts (2016), the organization failed to fulfill some basic aspects of a coworking (a proper workspace, for example) and to build real trust between the resident companies and also residents and the space – greenwashing accusations and the creation of an in-house brand perceived as a competitor reinforced that. The expectations created by the discourse that Malha proposed proved to be too ambitious and not backed by real actions, which is one of the big emergencies for sustainability: how to materialize inspiring concepts into real actions and viable solutions?



Figures 1-2. Giulia Bolzan de Morais, Coworkings as Focal Points for the Development of New Models for a Sustainable Fashion: Challenges and Opportunities, November, 30th, 2020.

This gap between the expectation that both coworkers and the overall society had regarding Malha caused for a big frustration already in the first indications of problems. Analyzing this case is possible to notice how important it is for a coworking to have transparency on their processes and challenges, so the reality is not clouded by overrated expectations that may backlash at any moment.

Transparency is not about choosing the information that is the most beautiful version to tell. Either the whole game opens or better assume that transparency is not a priority. By omitting the side that points to the need for improvement, it gives the impression that everything is fine when it is not (Re-Roupa, 2017).

A key aspect of a coworking is the physical space and structure offered to the coworkers. As other aspects, the location itself of Malha was interesting as a concept, in the middle of traditionally industrial area of the city connecting north and south parts of the city, but the logistic aspect was not good. The access with public transport was hard, the region can be dangerous and there is not much parking space. This difficulty to access was not only a problem for the coworkers, but also made it hard for visitors to go there.

The lack of good working conditions, like lack of proper air conditioning and unstable WIFI, added to the difficult access were disincentives for coworkers to actually go to the space – which in consequence made it harder for stronger partnerships to form.

This brings us to one of the four key characteristics ranked by Waters-Lynch and Potts: the ability that the coworking must

have to become a space that foments collaboration. Here, we go back to Cipolla *et al* (2015, p. 130) to state that collaboration requires for participants to be co-producers of something that has benefits recognized by all.

This calls the attention to the importance of understanding the drivers and incentives for people to collaborate. Other than a nice word or a positive value, collaboration is an action, the co-production of benefits, and as it was possible to see in the case of Malha, it requires a good level of trust.

6. Final Remarks

The case study of Malha is valuable to demonstrate one of the great contradictions of sustainable fashion: the empty space between concept and practical reality.

In Malha we see the story of an idea that was able to gather many companies and draw the attention of the national media. However, behind the scenes, the practice was not living up to the concept and weakened the organization.

By the mobilization Malha was able to create in the beginning it is possible to still state that coworkings can act as focal points to foster collaboration towards social innovation and sustainability. However, it is important to carefully design the conditions for that to happen. Some aspects identified in this research are:

- High levels of transparency regarding both the values of the space and eventual challenges – discourse must be backed by practical actions or viable plans. With that they avoid the creation of expectations that cannot be met at that point and create a feeling of mutual trust, as everyone is aware of the real situation;

- Proper work conditions and easy access location. In order for partnerships to be formed inside the coworking, the coworkers must be at the space on a frequent basis. For that to happen it is important to be attentive to the easiness of access to the location, comfortable working conditions and availability of necessary technical assets;
- Accessibility – although Watters-Lynch and Potts (2016) add exclusivity as an aspect that helps to build trust, coworkings, as understood in this paper, are spaces designed especially for freelancers and small business and must consider that (particularly towards pricing).

As proposed by Manzini (2008), the path to sustainability is one of systematic discontinuities, Malha was one of them and opened the path for new spaces to follow. Regardless of its short life Malha's contribution to the spread of the discussion about sustainable fashion and collaboration in the industry is undeniable.



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She is conducting her studies at the intersection of Design and Science, in particular related to the application of biologic processes in substitution of the conventional manufacturing processes, in order to exploit their potentiality in terms of new aesthetics, languages and fruitions patterns. She has conducted several department researches and experimentations in the field of biomaterials, obtained from the re-use of organic waste from the agri-food chain, and collaborated as teaching assistant on the topic. She is actually part of the team of the Interdepartmental Center Saperi&Co of Sapienza University.

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MS in Design and PhD in Design and technologies for the enhancement of cultural heritage at Politecnico di Milano. From 2020, she is assistant Professor at the Department of Architecture of the University "G. d'Annunzio" of Chieti-Pescara. She teaches communication design for the fashion system as contract professor in the inter-university consortia Poli.Design, Milan Fashion Institute (Politecnico di Milano, Bocconi University, Catholic University) and Ard&nt (Politecnico di Milano, Brera Academy).

Visiting Professor at the School of Fashion and Design (SOFD) of the GD Goenka University in Gurgaon (New Delhi, India) and at the EDC Business School (Ecole des Dirigeants et des Créateurs d'entreprise) in Paris.

From 2011 to 2020, she has been a contract lecturer at the School of Design of the Politecnico di Milano and from 2009 to 2018 research fellow at the Design dept of the Politecnico di Milano, developing research on communication for the fashion system and on the relationships between design, culture and territory.

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After the three-year course in Bologna in "Industrial Product Design" he graduated at CDLM in Fashion System Design at University of Florence. He is interested in the creative sphere, confronting different expressive disciplines such as illustration, painting, videomaking, DIY, gaming, musical composition and writing.

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For over 20 years she worked in projects in Ethiopia, Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco, Yemen, Jordan, Haiti, with the most important national and international donors WHC - UNESCO, UNCCD, World Bank, European Commission, WMF, AICS. Since 2011 she has been collaborating with the DIDA UNIFI especially in projects around Maghreb countries and in the social field promoting Social Design projects and workshops using co-design methodologies.

She is professor of Service Design at DIDA UNIFI, professor of Design for Cultural Heritage in the License Course in Design at Ecole Euro-Méditerranéenne d'Architecture Design et Urbanisme de l'Université Euro-Méditerranéenne de Fès EMADU – UEMF in Morocco and visiting professor in some universities in Mediterranean countries.

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A scientific training gained in the national and international design environment gives him research and strategic planning skills in Design and Design for Fashion, thanks the relationship with supranational research and training institutions as Iacocca Institute of Lehigh University USA; Oxford Brookes University, England; Saint Petersburg University of Technology and Design, Russia; Goenka University, New Dheli, India; Tecnológico de Monterrey, Campus Sonora Norte, Mexico; BIFT Beijing University of Fashion Technology, Beijing, China; ESMOD Japan, School of Fashion Design, Tokyo, Politecnico di Milano.

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He is an Italian product designer. In 2015 he graduated in Design for Innovation at the University of Campania “Luigi Vanvitelli”. In 2019 he obtained a Doctoral Research Fellowship in Environment, Design and Innovation at the University of Campania “Luigi Vanvitelli”.

Main focus of his line of research are parametric design, medical design, and advanced manufacturing – knowledge acquired during his academic path. The Ph.D. course with industrial characterization has allowed him to carry out and consolidate his research activity, as well as at his university, also at the Escuela Técnica Superior de Ingeniería y Diseño Industrial (Universidad Politécnica de Madrid, Spain) and a company from Campania, based in Gricignano di Aversa, to design a system of innovative orthopedic devices through parametric design.

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A graduate of the CDLM in Fashion System Design, is interested in art, music and writing. She coordinates the virtual lab at DIDA (Department of Architecture) of the University of Florence (Italy), Design Campus section. Currently she works in communication projects of and for CDLM in Fashion System Design. She was involved in “Metamorphic Fashion Design” offering her contribution in the design of environments, as well as in the collection and organization of material.

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He is currently engaged in the research project: “Design, Art and Business: innovation, strategy and sustainable channels for the creation of value”, which focuses on the analysis and collection of information relating to the mapping of the relationships between Design, Contemporary Art and Companies starting from the Tuscan territory.

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She was a Visiting Professor at the Politecnico di Milano (Italy) and was awarded a CAPES PVEX scholarship (2019/2020). She is the Editor-in-Chief of ModaPalavra e-periódico (UDESC), Coordinator of the laboratory FPLab - Futuro do Presente (UDESC), Collaborating Researcher at the University of Lisbon (CIAUD/Portugal), and Integrated Researcher at the Trend-sObserver platform (Portugal).

Her areas of interest are focused on the following themes: Fashion Design, Trend Studies, Scenarios, Consumer Culture, Qualitative Research, Methodologies.

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Designer and PhD, is a Research Fellow at the dept. DADI of the University of Campania “Luigi Vanvitelli”. She is the author of “Il design nella società estemporanea” (2015) and “Open Brand. Nuovi linguaggi visivi per la moda” (2019); two monographs that represent her two main strands of research. One oriented to the study and innovation of design and production models of the design oriented industry and the other to innovation and experimentation, including design, of branding.

Since 2015 she has been teaching fashion and communication design courses at the Accademia delle Belle Arti di Napoli. Since 2009 she has been working as a professional visual designer and in 2017 she is co-founder of the Pluff design studio specialized in visual communication projects of national and international importance.

Among the main projects are the visual identity of the Italian Pavilion at the Venice Biennale (2015) and the creative direction of Milano Book City.

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She is a vocationally trained tailor, clothing engineer and designer. Her academic path at The University for Applied Sciences Hamburg (Clothing – Technology and Management B. Eng., 2019) and The University of Edinburgh (Design for Change MA, 2020) was paired with diverse practical experience in the fashion industry. Following placements in bespoke tailoring and an extensive tailoring training with the HOLY Fashion Group, she worked as technical designer and studio manager for menswear designer Alex Mullins in London and spent one season with Proenza Schouler in New York. For several years she led sewing workshops for children and supported the student sewing lab at HAW Hamburg. Her label PAID VACATION functions as creative platform for contemporary tailoring and made-to-order fashion design. Since Autumn 2020 Juliet is based in Berlin where she works as fashion product developer.

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He has been involved in the creation of clothing and accessories collections for the fashion segment for almost thirty years, as a designer and responsible for the development of the collection, he has worked for several companies including the LVMH Group, Redwall, Hettabretz. He is an adjunct professor at the DIDA - UNIFI Department of Architecture, in the CDL in Industrial Design and CDLM Fashion System Design. Lecturer at IED, where he is the coordinator of two three-year courses. He has carried out supplementary teaching activities at the Politecnico di Milano for several years. He has held seminars and workshops in various universities. Stasi is Coordinator of the Steering Committee of the Master's Degree Course in Fashion System Design of the University of Florence - School of Architecture - DIDA.

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Her research interests concern the heritage/creativity sphere within the digital evolution; thus, the application, impact and opportunities that lie in the relationship between digital technologies and cultural heritage. She is currently working on a research project titled "Living archive. Disseminating and reusing the Fashion cultural heritage" founded by Regione Toscana.

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She is a color, materials, and finishes (CMF) designer at Garmin International and previously at Newell Brands spanning professional experience in consumer electronics and home goods. She is also a published researcher on trend forecasting and CMF trends as well as a published theorist on future aesthetics after artificial general intelligence is created and society heads toward artificial superintelligence. Kellie is focused on the direct impact that social and political events have on future aesthetics and their relationship with the economics of design.

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