Chapter 16
Research Project “Future of the Present:”
The Process and the Importance of Signs Observation into Fashion

Sandra Regina Rech
University of the State of Santa Catarina, Brazil

Gabrielle Stockey Chinchilha
University of the State of Santa Catarina, Brazil

ABSTRACT
This article has the purpose to describe and to report the methodology used by the research project “Future of the Present: an area to analysis and observation of signs”. It will clear up in detail the process of observation, analysis, and interpretation of signs and how new trends are possible to comprehend. It’s necessary to analyze and research different sections, at the same time that the human behavior is studied and also its lifestyle into the most various cultures. Understood as a language, the exploration of the signals issued by the society is a cross-behavioral study guide which enables tangible recommendations for all levels of the market supported by the irrational and emotional trend phenomenon and synthesized in images. It is a very detailed process that requires a lot of work and sensibility in order to see the evidences that the zeitgeist sends and to change them into fashion trends.

INTRODUCTION
Fashion, due to its ephemeral quality, characterizes a competitive section, pushed by globalization and by the possibility of getting new information faster and, as a result, this fast process stimulates the creation of new products that increase the competition between brands. According to Lipovetsky (1997), “fashion is the society’s mirror”, so taking it for granted it is possible to be studied everywhere such as in the streets, on the internet, in an art exhibit, in several news articles or in the habits and practices of a specific culture. Caldas (2006) asserts that from the 1970’s the concept of the word “fashion” was identified by other authors as a total social fact, that is, its system includes all the spheres of a society and a culture.

The society sends signs that need to be perceived, analyzed and interpreted by professionals...
that are capable and qualified to understand them, so that they can get to their target in a synthetic and organized way. The present article aims at explaining how these signs are captured from the others and how they are transformed into fashion concepts and trends.

Due to the access to the large amount of information we have today, trends transform themselves into an immense variety of options. The task of a fashion trend researcher expert is to analyze the research, compare it with the times, both culturally and socio-economically speaking, in which we are living and decide what may and what may not be considered in a thoughtful line, reducing the amount of mistake regarding the determination of new trends.

This way, the research on trends and explorations must be understood as a process, as a language, in a constant dialogue with the consumer guiding designers in the creation of fashion products tuned with the desires and needs of the market.

In order to get to the concept of a new product it is also necessary to find out what the consumers lack in products that already exist or create new needs. Caldas (2006) claims that, in any way, it is in the direct contact with the contemporary cultural scene in big cities besides, of course, surveys done in fairs, stores, department stores etc. where necessary references are obtained in order to prepare an updated and commercially located collection.

The use of devices as fashion trends, which echoes the spirit of its time, appears as a tactic used by companies that are trying to figure out and predict the desires of consumers and the qualities of the commercial market in a given future. “The monitoring of fashion, or fashion research, analyze information from different areas such as economics, politics, sociology, science and technology to arrive at the formulation of predictions in the form of trend” (Feghali, 2001, p.13).

Increasingly, companies in the area of fashion through the search for signs emerging in its various manifestations, grant the knowledge of information relevant to the sectors of marketing and product development, investing profits in a kind of insurance against failure. The collection and interpretation of evidence of the so-called spirit of the times must be grasped as a translation of a cultural language in a specific time, an assessment of the researcher about the times to come.

Gimeno (2000) reports that the production, promotion, distribution and setting up a set of elements that form and must be managed to develop the competitiveness of the productive chain of fashion in the face of a changing market. Currently, competition is taking place based on differentiation (price-quality-creativity) and centered on the incorporation of elements such as style, design and fashion products (Rech, 2006). Therefore, in the production chain of fashion, the ranking is occurring downstream of the upstream of the end for the production of raw material. In developed countries, currently, the trend is rising in level of importance, and the activities of marketing, sales and production flexibility are significant. “The production of textiles and clothing is now driven by end customers who look for product standards and production in upstream sectors” (Prochnik, 2002, p.67).

This new format of the chain is related to the gradual division between the tangible and intangible, material and immaterial, the productive functions and the recovery (Lupatini, 2005). The author notes that although the modernization of the textile and clothing through the material assets (investment in machinery, equipment and raw materials) remains important, increasingly it is not enough. This shortage is accentuated when competitiveness of the productive chain of fashion as a whole and not as only as a few companies and / or links, since the active materials form only one dimension to sustainable gains in competitiveness of the chain.

Intangible assets are increasingly essential to the competitiveness of the textile and clothing. In this sphere, intangible assets largely include active before and after production, such as: design,
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