

Fashion, trends, technologies

The thing newer technologies and fashion share is innovation, looking forward. However fashion does not only look forward, it keeps the past as a central part of the craft. Trends celebrate the past while looking at the present, and the role newer technologies play are how to make those trends innovative, new, fresh. The role the newer technologies play don't have to be obvious, as using digital prints instead of screen printed ones. But they can be very invasive on a trend like a new type of fabric (fermented fabric, made from grapes using a certain type of bacteria) which drastically alters the way a standard silhouette looks and feels. They can be practical, like using a certain type of polymer to create waterproof garments or completely decorative like laser cutting leather to appear as lace. But all of the techniques add something new, making it relevant to the now and revisiting its original value.



Machines have played a huge part in fashion since the Industrial Revolution. Some machines have been around for quite some time and have been (and still are) evolving with their time like weaving and knitting machines, but the use of laser cutting and 3d printing machines is relatively new.

Iris van Herpen put 3d printing on the map in the couture world and I respect her for that, as it is a daring move to enter a very digital approach into a mainly handmade world. Couture has always been about an incredible amount of handwork and detail and to see 3d printing become a part of that is what sums fashion up for me, embracing new technologies and using those to create the vision you want. That's why I'm interested in using new technology in my work as I like to tell a story or evoke a mood.

New methods give me the options to tell a story, like laser cutting to create details I could never have done by hand or digital printing for the most amazing fabrics or really using technology to create something that interacts with the environment like the smoke dress from Anouk Wipprecht that produces smoke when someone gets near the wearer.

One of the examples of using a trend and transforming it is the

row of short shift dresses, a silhouette from the sixties, which is relevant now because of the techniques used. It takes the basic shape of the shift dress but transforms it by using technologies as fusing fabrics with ultrasonic bonding which eliminates the need to finish an edge (visible in the dress on the right), new dyeing techniques to decrease the use of water and become more eco-friendly (4th photo) or laser cutting to create intricate detail and showing a different fabric underneath (visible in the 2nd photo). It revises the old trend, takes the basis and adds the innovation of the new techniques available. The sixties were modern innovative and fun, bringing that feeling to the now as a new mod age through silhouettes, colors and detail but transforming it by what the present day has to offer.



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Fashion is influenced by the now. What do people want? You could see that when the recession started, it showed similar paths of trends as when the big depression started. People wanted bright, colorful and luxurious items, simply because they did not want to realize the depression or as a sign of battling against it. But there was also a side embracing it, more low key, minimalistic designs with more durability. And taking durability as one of the traits, this is where the innovation shines through. The advancing of techniques and production of new ones led to new ways to create that form of durability, as in production methods or developing new fibers for fabrics. Also think of sustainability like dyeing fabrics through a new process costing less water and energy or creating intricate designs using a laser cutter, diminishing the cost significantly but uplifting a product to a new level. All ways how new technologies add to the world of fashion and its trends.

Fashion is unique in that way because it combines everything, the past the present and the future. We keep looking back for references, inspirations, silhouettes. Using the past as a reference to a feeling, a time, a place, a vision. Seeing how everything fits into this time, what do people want/ need. And of course looking at the future, what could be the next big thing, what evolution in techniques can we bring and use. In that way fashion also stimulates new techniques by demanding progress and testing boundaries. Thinking of ways to make 3d printing more wearable/flexible, spraying fabric from a can (fabrican company) and Ultrasonic bonding to create more durable clothing are all examples how fashion also pushes new technology forward. The 'old' trends become new by using what is available at the present time. If newer technologies

had a breakthrough in developing a new fabric an old silhouette or detail can be transformed completely. An example of that is a piece inspired by the middle ages, crafted with new technologies (like lasercutting fabrics for details). It celebrates the history in a modern way, homage to the past but looking to the present and the future.

If I have to answer the question where fashion lies in relation to newer technologies, I have to say opportunities.

The opportunities that are available with new technologies are vastly growing by the diy community. Open source helps to hone skills or learn new ones. The options you have as a designer are expanding fast, you don't need a specialist anymore for certain things. New technologies open new options, it gives the tools to look and create in a new way. That is what makes new technologies so interesting to me, the opportunities it provides me, a way to tell my story how I want it.