

Doing Digital Fashion - Use and Reception

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Abstract

This article uses multi-level contextual analysis to describe the new sartorial practice of dressing with virtual clothes. The focus of this interdisciplinary study is on media and socio-cultural aspects. Sitting at the interface between the human mass, media, and fashion, it can only be experienced on a screen in unreal spaces and synthetic situations. In this dispositif, body concepts, representation, social patterns of action, and communication strategies can be identified that hinge on a radical detachment from textile as a physical material, but, nevertheless, cannot do without concrete references to textile material. This leads to a new approach in dealing with clothes as bundled data packets. The dynamic development and seamless integration into established business models and existing fashion concepts makes it necessary to interrogate the phenomenon, especially concerning current discourses on the sustainability of intangible products. Within this study, the processes behind the images provide the methodological approach for the analysis. Through typologizing instruments, a set of research-guiding examples is compiled. This leads to a conceptual understanding of virtual dresses and five context units for multi-stage context analysis. This study traces technical, societal, and social changes, and works out its significance for future fashion developments.

Keywords: Digital Fashion, Data Dress, Image Context Analysis, Digital Resources