TEXTUAL INNOVATION OF THE AUDIOVISUAL LANGUAGE IN FASHION FILM

Abstract
In the last few years the spread of audiovisual productions with diverse links to the world of fashion has grown consistently, in particular regarding the dissemination of a phenomenon known as the Fashion Film (FF). From the point of view of the language being used, the FF shows clear elements deriving from pre-existing audiovisual forms, including the short-feature film, commercial, music video and art film. An in-depth analysis of the FF’s audiovisual language allows for a greater understanding of its functions, for or to whom, by which means and in which places it can be consumed, and moreover what are the aesthetic and ethical expressive constraints of such a product. The FF is a branded form, produced and financed by fashion brands and companies that invest in the film as a vehicle for dissemination and promotion. On the one hand the medium therefore serves the fashion world, allowing it to widen and enrich the expression and communication dimensions of their brand; on the other hand it helps audiovisual creators and producers to find financial partners for their artistic projects. The trends emerging in FFs and their explicit reference to precedent audiovisual languages and genres furthermore reveal several general dimensions, which are not necessarily mutually exclusive. For fashion brands the FF seems to be an effective tool to connect to innovative projects, often not only at formal level but also in terms of ethics and values. The FF has the potential therefore to become a mode of expression that refines not only the pre-existent categories of audiovisual forms, but also the type of relations that the fashion brands establish with their target audience.

Keywords
Fashion film; fashion; audiovisuals; video; language; text; brand; communication.

In the last few years, in a period roughly around the start of the 2010s, the spread of audiovisual productions linked to the world of fashion in several ways (presentations, runway shows, backstage, making of) has consistently grown, in particular regarding the dissemination of a phenomenon called ‘fashion film’ (henceforth FF). One of the reasons behind the interest shown by the fashion industry for audiovisual communication is certainly the wide dissemination attained by online videos through the use of the Internet and in particular, since 2006, with the surge of YouTube and the social media¹. Saying whether FF could be defined as a genre² (as art films or industrial films), or just

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a trend (like viral videos), or perhaps more precisely a format (like music videos) would be hard to say. Undoubtedly it is a repository holding an extremely heterogeneous set of specimens. From the point of view of the language being used, the FF shows clear elements deriving from pre-existing audiovisual forms, including the short-feature film, commercial, music video and art film. An in-depth analysis of the audiovisual language could be of help in fully understanding what is at stake, by trying to also see what FFs are useful for or to whom, and by which means and in which places they can be made use of, and also what are the aesthetic and ethical expressive constraints of such a product.

The FF appears to be a sort of super-short format (if we compare it with short-feature films in cinema which can be 15-minute long) and is particularly suitable for fruition on the Internet and social media. Usually it has a length which starting from one minute and a half, many times comes to around three-four minutes, but usually never exceeding six. This is a branded form, namely produced and financed by fashion brands and companies interested in investing in the film as a vehicle for dissemination and promotion. Generally the name of the brand (or griffe) appears in the opening or closing credits and, similarly to cinema products, the title of the film and the director’s name (besides all the other technical roles) are also reported. The FF’s meaning is comprised precisely in these components: an audiovisual product linked to a fashion brand, signed by an author, with a language which differs from a merely promotional product. The filmmakers are called upon to translate in the FF their signature style, their aesthetic world, their gaze, by striking an effective meeting point between two often-distant dimensions: the authorship-experimental and the business dimensions. The weight of these two in the final balance is a choice also depending on the commission, but in general this is a setting where filmmakers feel they can express their creativity with some degree of freedom. This is therefore an object that from a semiotic point of view holds a particular status in its being a cultural construct, conveying a meaning like any other audiovisual product, but it is – so to speak – oriented towards a business proposition which drives its production, independently from the degree of freedom assigned to it. The FF seems to be a freer, more creative, and aesthetic alternative to the strong codification of the language of traditional advertisement.

I. THE STYLE OF COMMUNICATION IN FASHION

In any case the advertising communication and language in fashion do not follow the typical conventional codes of other business, industrial or trade sector. It can be said therefore that fashion represents a special case in the general scenario of communication. First of all, the dimension of picture is favoured; which is to be expected considering that clothes, shoes, accessories must be visible first of all, and in effect radio is certainly not one of the preferential media of fashion. In this context the visual dimension takes up such a weighty role that it leads towards forms of self-evidence, towards the showing and ‘monstration’ as a self-sufficient mode. As if restricting to just state: ‘here… look’,
and nothing else. The glossy care for visual texts, the locations, the choice of models become foundational elements in fashion communication, so that they foster a ‘photographic’ mode also in audiovisual solutions. Also from a sound point of view, then silence and the unsaid are more consistent with an aestheticising communication, except for the customary use of commercials with usually seductive and alluring voice-over. The narrative development is traditionally underplayed: in place of typified characters, anonymous models are employed, playing out clothes and accessories which become the true protagonists of the narrative. Or instead famous testimonials that do not embody any role but rather convey their personal identity within the commercial are chosen.

Fashion tends towards a sort of a timeless crystallised vision where items must appear in their utmost attractiveness, in a sort of eternal present. Historically, fashion communication appears to be quite traditionalist and conservative for this reason.

The FF displays specific features and a particularly suited potential: the prevailing of the picture, the limited presence of the verbal component, the possibility of creating detailed and controlled atmospheres (devoid of any contamination from television flow) and, last but not least, the opportunity by the designers to entrust their creations to another, equally creative and authorial, signature (the filmmaker’s). In this way the FF can turn into an innovative and trendy communication form, while at the same time ensuring continuity with the specific aesthetic tradition of fashion communication.

Burberry’s head designer Christopher Bailey commented: “We are now as much a media-content company as we are a design company, because it’s all part of the overall experience”.

2. WHAT IS A FASHION FILM?

The FF’s boundaries are quite blurred and therefore quite differentiated audiovisual products are indicated or labelled as FF according to contexts. The phenomenon started to be outlined in relatively recent times when many events and productions were made under the umbrella of FF.

Since 2008 A Shaded View On Fashion Film in Paris was probably the first festival to have specifically used the definition of fashion film. Then came the first edition of the FF Festival of La Jolla and New York in 2010, followed by the festival of Berlin in 2012, another important event at international level. In the last few years, and in particular in 2014, a full explosion took place: cities like Chicago, Madrid, Porto, London, Milan, Copenhagen, Istanbul, and countries like Australia or Mexico, have all hosted international festivals dedicated to FF. A proliferation that has created a specific market and a showcase of growing visibility for the dissemination and enrichment of the phenomenon. Outside the closed circuit of festivals and insiders in the sectors of reference, FF’s potential audiences should also be considered, by taking into account the development opportunities of the phenomenon that have taken hold thanks to the wide-scoped and novel visibility provided by the Internet. A key element, typical of the web dimension concerns celebrities, and the presence of famous filmmakers or testimonials (sport, cinema, music, TV, fashion, the Internet) in a video becomes a sort of additional effect triggering an immediate effect.

\[2\] Díaz Soloaga, García Guerrero, “Fashion Films as a New Communication Format to Build Fashion Brands”: 47.
Usually FFs found in the circuit of dedicated festivals attended very rarely by celebrities, present instead a very low online dissemination, in terms of numbers, which means invisibility in the web. These are often niche products at times involving creatives (fashion designers or audiovisual artists) of limited notoriety or simply products geared to sophisticated tastes. The feature of this kind of FF is decidedly more attuned to art films, authorial short-feature films, underground films, sophisticated music videos. However it is precisely in this setting that a sort of ‘specific’ development of what is appearing to be a new full-fledged medial format is being defined. This can be found in the Internet sites where filmmakers and studios present their activities, and where FFs are often mentioned explicitly together with commercials and music videos, and are now being considered an independent format.

3. FASHION FILMS’ DIMENSIONS

At present, the FF’s scenario is quite diversified and in progress, but perhaps some macro approach areas may be identified which are adopted in the making of the audiovisual products which can be grouped under the FF heading (whether closely linked to fashion brands’ productions, or selected or awarded in festivals dedicated to FF, although not having fashion as their explicit focus). The categories we are presenting here are extremely general and processed through a semiotic approach, namely a textual analysis of their language, in order to bring order to a chaotic universe often told with a certain degree of vagueness. In the trends emerging in FFs and making explicit reference to extant audiovisual languages and genres, we can also identify some general dimensions, which are not necessarily mutually excluding: a displaying dimension (the same that can be often found in fragrance commercials), a narrative dimension (derived from cinema language), a rhythmic dimension (derived from the music video format, but also incorporated in the type of online videos usually defined as ‘viral’), and finally an aesthesic dimension (close to the approaches found in video art). It has to be underlined that those four dimensions are not four ‘types’ of FF but properly four different dimensions that may theoretically be contemporary present in a FF; some of them (or only one) may be prevalent, helping us to recognize four different ‘ideal types’; but it should be clear that these four dimensions are not alternative.

Now let us move to the detailed description of these macro-trends, while at the same time attempting to analyse some of these cases and relevant examples.

3.1. Displaying Dimension

The audiovisual medium usually preferred by fashion brands is the commercial, however chosen almost exclusively to promote individual products (especially fragrances) and not clothes or collections, nor even corporate communication linked to the brand. A codified audiovisual style has been developed around the commercial for fragrances, which has de facto become an autonomous micro-genre. Its main features are the presence of famous testimonials and top models, a rather total lack of dialogue, the choice of prestigious locations (world capitals or exotic places), accurate musical choices, an

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alluring and seductive voice *over*, glossy, refined and luxurious visual atmospheres. This is a kind of commercial with a standardised configuration, aiming at favouring visual description and minimising the strictly narrative component, using above all sets and elements highly connotated. The recent convention of making maxi versions of these commercials has expanded their length in terms of minutes without however altering their language structure. Let us mention here a classic feature like *Thunder Perfect Mind* made for Prada by Jordan & Ridley Scott and screened at the Berlin Film Festival in 2005, or the case of David Bowie for Louis Vuitton, *L’Invitation Au Voyage*, shot by Romain Gavras in 2013. Or again the self-celebratory *Reincarnation* (2014) by Chanel, with the creative direction of Karl Lagerfeld, and the participation of Pharrell Williams, Cara Delevingne and Gérardine Chaplin.

The *displaying dimension* owes a lot to the language of fashion photography, as well as to the runway shows and the presentations of collections. The FFs which were made according to this approach show iconically rich and sophisticated atmospheres, but at the same time devoid of any truly narrative content. They often turn out to be boring and repetitive, even when made by famous filmmakers. Just think about the commercial *Mr. Burberry*, shot by the Academy Award winner Steve McQueen, which even the director seems to be reluctant to mention: “The award-winning and acclaimed director of *12 Years a Slave* and *Hunger* has made ads for Burberry perfume. But he clearly doesn’t want anyone to know”\(^\text{10}\).

An effective parody staging some typical and recurrent stereotypes of this kind of FF is the short-feature tautologically titled *Fashion Film* (2013), directed by Matthew Frost and produced by the brand Viva Vena. Here we find Lizzy Caplan, the actress famous for her role in the TV series *Masters of Sex* (Showtime, 2013-2016), uttering through a (very typical and recurrent) voice over, some grotesque statements like: “When I’m alone I pretend to be in a movie, […] a kind of movie I don’t quite understand […] sometimes I think to myself in French”. Matthew Frost’s short feature is quite effective in labelling rather cruelly the cliches that were quite common in FFs especially in the past. Now the creative and production overactivity involved in FF is moving towards more original tracks, although still keeping true to choices which are typical of a world that is very conservative in many ways.

Let’s look for example at Gucci, with Alessandro Michele as creative director, where, although still in line with the ‘institutional’ aesthetic often time characterising the communication of big brands, a full-fledged audiovisual strategy is designed and put to work through the films made by photographer Glen Luchford.

Let’s watch in particular the film made for the Cruise collection in 2016. The layout of the relationship between sound and picture would make this video lean towards a rhythmic dimension typical of music videos, but the lack of live recording, as well as lip sync, eliminates any realistic reference. The only sound being heard comes from the sound track, as is usual for many other commercials by fashion brands. In this sense the displaying dimension seems to prevail on the narrative one, as is again usual: showing more than telling. At the same time, the choice of a long sequence shot makes editing rather unnecessary, thus contributing to give the video a slow and swaying movement, without cuts and breaks, in the attempt to create a rhythmic continuity. The silhouettes of the human bodies dancing in the foreground merge with the background, thus em-

phasizing the *trompe-l’œil* effect, already present in the paintings. The *décor* and the choreography of the video appear then to be a sort of *audiovisual variation of a runway show* (where usually the models walk in a straight line, with serious and inexpressive postures). In this case, instead, the models remain each in their place, moving in time with the music, although keeping the same serious lack of expression typical of a fashion show, mere dress-wearing bodies, thus producing the effect of eliminating any possible element of narrative realism.

Some overall signification elements may be drawn from this analysis: this is an emblematic case of FF, whose task consists in building an atmosphere exalting and completing the collection’s universe of meaning. Precisely the ‘building of an atmosphere’ appears to be one of the semiotic procedures at the heart of the fashion discourse which seems worthy of an in-depth analysis. Themes such as youth, conviviality, energy of movement are all here enclosed in a visual décor linked to history, the past, culture. Everything is expressed through an aesthetic key (the frescoes) but integrated with motifs placed in a strongly anthropic and culturally-defined perspective (paintings and figures within a villa, not in a natural setting). This FF succeeds in creating something more than a mere hybrid between a runway show and a music video, while at the same time also meeting the goal of enhancing the Gucci collection. The large circulation of the video on YouTube (one million three-hundred thousand views, November 2016) indicates a success that for today’s standards is already of a viral kind; in particular if we consider that there aren’t any celebrities in the video, which is driven only by the Gucci brand and its intrinsic contents. Although this is an audiovisual product made outside viral canons, the adopted solutions have found a great following in audiences.

The success-gauging figures did decidedly surge ahead when Gucci opted for a campaign with a strong promotional investment and several teasers broadcast through the media during the summer of 2016 announcing its debut in early September. In this case however we can talk about a more traditional commercial for a fragrance, Gucci Guilty, shot in Venice with a subdued and glossy style, again following a cinema reference, both in the music score (the Adagietto from Gustav Mahler’s Symphony no. 5) and its location, both taken from *Morte a Venezia* by Luchino Visconti (1971), in its turn an adaptation for cinema of a novella by Thomas Mann. The significant element here is the presence of the testimonial, the eccentric and mysterious actor Jared Leto, caught in an allusive narrative situation with tacit erotic implications: a love triangle with two models, with half-naked bodies and romantic caresses. The outcome: almost five million views. The same creative team and the brand have made two very different types of audiovisual products, with different outcomes, whose comparison is useful in order to understand the difference between the FF and a commercial as format types (although these differentiations remain somewhat quite fleeting).

3.2. *Narrative Dimension*

A different approach from the displaying dimension consists in applying to the fashion film a full *narrative dimension*\(^\text{11}\) clearly derived from contemporary cinema, therefore

\(^{11}\) It can be assumed that audiovisual narration starts at a minimum level, since the simple sequencing of the shots, but it is equally obvious that narration can assume increasing complexity levels. A key element lies in the emergence of what Paul Ricoeur called a “conceptual network of action” (see *La sémantique de l’action*, Paris: CNRS Éditions, 1977), or, when in a narration purposes are emerging, as well as roles played by subjects and their mutual interactions. When I speak of narrative dimension, I am referring to this specific stage of complexity (see Odin, *De la fiction*, Italian translation, 2004, *Della finzione*, 22).
through the creation of a micro-story, with characters, acting, live sound recording, and even locations away from the glossy worlds represented by the traditional iconography of fashion. In opting for this choice, one of the first among the most famous brands to stand out was Prada, which in 2012 commissioned Roman Polanski to make a short feature titled *A Therapy*, with famous international actors like Helena Bonham Carter and Ben Kingsley. This is a full-fledged light and ironic mini film, which succeeded in focusing the story telling on the brand’s own world, without making its fruition too heavy because of that. In continuity with this solution, in 2013 Prada also commissioned Wes Anderson to make *Castello Cavalcanti*, a short feature inspired by Federico Fellini and focusing on Italian culture and life style, and the same director, together with Roman Coppola, was also assigned the making of *Candy* (2013) a series of commercials with the new diva Léa Seydoux, which consisted in a mini short feature subdivided in different segments. A very effective operation with a modular layout, which has enabled to segment and reassemble the commercial-short object in different-size formats, with a good balance between the language of the commercial and that of cinema.

The short feature film has therefore asserted itself as one of the possible routes to take for the FF, as also shown by the choice made by the brand Miu Miu to produce, starting from 2011, a series called *Women’s Tales*, assigned only to women filmmakers (reaching its twelfth episode in late 2016). With its plenty of cases, this choice shows the many variants that may be found inside the FF format. The peculiarity of these films consists in their succeeding in downplaying or even eliminating the promotional and business dimension of the brand, while making the theme of fashion and dressing emerge as an everyday practice, a life style and personal experience, drawing inspiration from atmospheres and worlds quite detached from the traditional settings represented by the iconography of fashion. The merit goes to the creative skills of filmmakers and their collaborators, but also to the courage and open mind set of the brand Miu Miu that has given artists complete freedom of action. An operation that, especially in the most recent episodes of the series, aims increasingly at everyday reality, by creating an innovative way of approaching the production and commissioning of audiovisual works by the fashion industry. Other episodes of the same series move towards different dimensions, and of these the most interesting examples are those reaching innovative solutions by mixing diverse approaches, thus contributing to configure what could be outlined as the ‘specific’ future of FF.

*Muta* (2012) by Lucrecia Martel, second episode of the series *Women’s Tales*, is an interesting experimental case which comprises together displaying and narrative dimensions. The theme of the film is a mutation: a swarm of insects surrounds a derelict ship along the river Paraguay and turns into a group of women with invisible faces. The film sounds, very detailed thanks to an accurate sound design, do not show the realistic feature of the live recording but, although somewhat corresponding to visual actions, they maintain an abstract and unreal feature, similar to a plausible but not credible sound score. The sound dimension contributes significantly to create a disquieting and disturbing atmosphere in the film. Here the sound becomes a relevant parameter to detect those that in semiotics are called diverse *enunciative strategies*. The different choices relating to sound (live vs non live recordings, dialogues vs non dialogues, lip sync, tone likelihood) turn into a useful comparison parameter to grasp variants and possible developments in FF, especially at enunciative level (namely, the way to construct the relationship between subjects and the discourse in audiovisual language).
3.3. Rhythmic Dimension

While, as we have seen, the displaying dimension moves towards a direction tending to show the fashion universe (and its ethereal, refined and luxury decors) and the narrative dimension privileges instead the construction of stories, characters, and realistic narratives, the rhythmic dimension focuses on the editing, synchronization with music, the construction of audiovisual alchemies with surprise and attention-grabbing effects. For these reasons the audiovisual products with ample use of rhythmic, often electronic music, updated to the latest trends, are the most representative. At the same time the construction of paradoxical, unusual and highly performative situations, aims at raising curiosity and fostering the interest of web audiences, who are acquainted with a ‘viral’ dimension. From this point of view, the grammar of the music video, which is more than thirty years old, is a valid point of reference for the designing of new developments in audiovisual language. It is not by chance then that some of the best music video directors were involved in the shooting of FFs. Spike Jonze, famous director of underground music videos (Sonic Youth, Chemical Brothers, Beck, Bjork) as well as filmmaker, was called to make the campaign for the fragrance Kenzo World by Humberto Leon and Carol Lim, the creative team of the brand. The commercial-short feature *My Mutant Brain* (2016) represents, both for thematic contents and the kind of language, a break away from stylistic layouts and audiovisual genres. In the traditionalistic universe full of repetitive clichés, as well, like that of the commercials for fragrances, some alternative courses have appeared which move towards the direction of FF. In following the rhythmic dimension of the music video, in Spike Jonze’s FF a dance performance linked to an euphoric explosion of healthy folly is staged. By mimicking animals, dancing and running in front a wall of mirrors, actress Margaret Qualley turns into a sort of super-heroine capable of launching destructive rays. In closing, while dancing on a theatre stage, she takes a final plunge into the petals of a flower composition; the element revealing at last that this is the commercial of a fragrance.

This depiction of an explosive and unrestrained woman was extremely successful online, turning into a viral phenomenon quite rapidly. Moreover, the highly performative contents which can somehow be labelled as ‘amusing’, bizarre and also widely shareable, are some of the most common elements of viral videos. The film made by Spike Jonze shows many similarities with his famous music video from 2001, *Weapon of Choice* with Fatboy Slim. The themes in common and the production analogies between these two cases, as well as the similarities in choreographies and performances, support the idea that FFs are a territory easily drawing from previous medial formats. The differences in audiovisual formats, especially in short features (music videos, commercials, shorts, art films) are often found in those modalities that, as previously said, are defined as enunciative in semiotics: different types of utterances, different communication contracts, diverse solutions leading the audiovisual texts towards one direction or another.

3.4. Aesthetic Dimension

The most eccentric examples with respect to the classic advertising production, or the merely rhythmic dimension of music video, are found in the aesthetic dimension\textsuperscript{12},

\textsuperscript{12} The ‘aesthetic’ dimension is what, from the semiotic point of view, pertains to the field of the senses, of perception, of corporeity; see P. Fabbri, “Il significante del mondo”, in *Semiotica in nuce II*, edited by P. Fabbri, G. Marrone, Roma: Meltemi, 2001, 338-335 (329).
namely in the productions looking more explicitly at artistic experimentation and research within the audiovisual language, which may be defined or somewhat comprised in forms of video art (see the case of Roach, 2015, by Alexa Karolinski for the designers Eckhaus Latta). In particular these are audiovisual products belonging to the circuit of fashion film festivals, therefore accessible to only a close group of insiders and experts, and because of that relegated to a niche visibility, although they are widely available on the Internet (in particular the Vimeo platform). On the other hand this is the most creative and innovative space within the FF scenario: a laboratory of ideas that more or less directly merge in mainstream or viral productions. Let’s take for example Jumper (2014), a short feature directed by Justin Anderson and produced by designer Jonathan Saunders to celebrate his first ten years of activity (awarded in Paris with the Grand Prix ASVOFF 2014). A film that with its rhythmic and dilated takes, focuses at first on the theme of water by exhibiting a deliberate figurative recollection of the series about Swimming Pools, made by pop artist David Hockney in the 1960s-70s. At the same time the film owes a narrative debt to Teorema by Pier Paolo Pasolini (1968), drawing from it the idea of the disconcerting presence of an unknown and unexpected visitor. This is a film that by effectively combining elements of video art and avant-garde cinema, has received many international awards. Its specificity, which is shared by many other examples, lies in the fact that, although awarded as FF and despite its being commissioned by a brand, the theme of fashion is never explored both at the figurative and narrative level. A type of operation which has seen with increasing frequency the brands standing in the background and moving in between art patronage and cultural self-promotion, in order to envelop the brand in a high-level value-laden dimension. To a certain degree in the aesthetic dimension, the other dimensions we have identified (displaying, narrative, rhythmic) are used in their turn at varying levels, by following however an approach that veers decidedly towards an avant-garde direction, both for the themes being explored and the language being used. In its more experimental dimension the FF’s universe is quite vast and extremely varied, therefore here we can mention just a few macro-trends. Among the awarded works or those worthy of special attention from the films presented in the most recent editions of the festivals, we can identify some prevailing thematic areas. On the one hand we can find socio-anthropological investigation and documentation, with features focusing on urban, youth issues or subcultures. For example the representation of the world of skaters is relevant, as shown in the film produced by Vans with lo-fi vintage pictures (Gosha Rubchinskiy for Vans, 2015, directed by Julian Klincewicz) or in the short feature That One Day (2016), made by documentarist Crystal Moselle for the series of Women’s Tales by Miu Miu. Another well-represented dimension is that of homosexual and lesbian love and eroticism, and more in general the theme of sexuality and gender: both in its aesthetic dimension (Ephemeral Nature, by Gsus Lopez for Displexia Art & Jewellery) or simply erotic, and in the dimension of its social representation. Food as well, a trendy topic by itself, is strongly represented in FF both in its aesthetic (The Kitchen, Tin Yip, 2015) or anthropological dimension (Hungry for Love, Justin Ambrosino, 2015), as well as in its link with sexuality (Crème Caramel, Canada or Muk Bang, Tn’T for Vogue Korea, about food porn). It can be said that, within the aesthetic dimension, FFs are quite open to sensorial, perceptive, corporeal exploration, and therefore are linked to food as well as sexuality and their related social representations. At the same time FF becomes an experimentation laboratory for the genre dimensions of audiovisual language.

Undoubtedly there is a wide creative wealth emerging in this area, even though at times some distortions appear due to an excess of self-complacency. There is also the
risk of not considering with due attention the fact that some sensitive issues may not be explored everywhere, especially within textual frameworks which, whether we like it or not, remain strongly linked to elitist and glossy worlds. One example of that is the case of *Act da Fool* (2010), a short feature made by Harmony Korine for the brand Proenza Schouler, where the world of hardship, rage and poverty is represented through an aestheticising gaze, which has baffled many. The issue of the relationship between aesthetics and ethic persists also in FF, as it would happen for any other product with a business as well as a cultural side. Similarly to commercials, there are a few questions to ask, for example: what can a FF speak about? How far can its legitimacy go, also in consideration that in any case this is a promotional product?

### 4. CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, for fashion brands the FF seems to be an effective tool to connect to innovative projects, often not only at formal level but also in terms of ethics and values. In perspective, although not closely following the repetitive approaches of commercials or just viral ones, FFs can gain a vast dissemination on the web. This also opens up to a different way of understanding the placement of a fashion brand within a social discourse: not only luxury and elegance, but also irony (often distant from this world), or even desecration, or even forms of awareness raising on social issues (from environmental sustainability to the protection of civil rights or minorities). The FF can become a mode of expression redefining not only categories pre-existing the audiovisual, but also the type of relation that the fashion brands establish with their target audience. The latter appears to be no longer a simple and passive recipient of a formal product, but as a direct player involved in the communication pact with the brand. A vision which in recent years is moving into an engine of change for the entire sector. In particular the FFs placed within a hybrid typology, which merges accessibility towards large audiences with a refined aesthetic sensitivity, have enjoyed a large success both in terms of media visibility (on magazines, the press and sector blogs), and in terms of views on video portals. Instead of simply describing or showing clothes and accessories, the FF succeeds in translating in audiovisual terms the implicit aesthetics traversing the entire fashion discourse of an individual designer, namely that complex world surrounding both conception and creation, the experience of those wearing fashions and adopting it as a full-fledged life form, and its observation and dissemination by the media, blogs and specialised magazines. There is a sort of a view à part characterising the fashion discourse with respect to any other communication areas, and producing a different understanding of things. In this way FFs are able to cast a view of that kind on reality and acquire meaning precisely because they represent a way to have an audiovisual experience of that sort of sensitivity.

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