

# Style in knitted textiles and fashion

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**Abstract.** The presented research relates the basic elements of the art theory with the concept of style and fashion design. The objective of the research was to determine how style is manifested in knitting in different periods of fashion seasons. The collections of three designers were compared: Missoni, Issey Miyake and Sonia Rykiel, in four different seasons in three different years. The basic artistic elements used in the presented research were: point, line, light-dark and colour together with syntactic rules. A combination of different elements and syntactic rules refers to different artistic languages, which have their own artistic grammar, i.e. a different style. All three investigated fashion designers used knitting in their collections as a significant element which defined their style. Different knitting technologies as well as different yarns made of synthetic or natural fibres in all colour spectra significantly influence the surface of a knitted fabric. Even when the technology is the same, the use of different materials, structures, colours, etc. creates various unique surfaces. The method used in the presented research was a style matrix which is developed from the axiomatic system. Only the part dealing with the language of fine arts and the pictorial speech – the style of a certain designer and a certain work of art/knitted fabric was used. After the selected three designers were examined through all the periods, it was concluded that each designer can be characterised by his own style. Despite the influencing fashion trends, all the compared designers still retained their own style, their own techniques, their own inspirations.

## 1. Introduction

The presented research relates the basic elements of the art theory with the concept of style and fashion design. It is difficult (or even impossible) to provide a universal definition of style. Through history, art historians defined style as realism, impressionism, dadaism, op-art, etc [1]. The objective of the research was to determine how style is manifested in knitting in different periods of fashion seasons. The collections of three designers were compared: Missoni, Sonia Rykiel and Issey Miyake, in four different seasons (Fall Ready-to-Wear, Resort, Spring Ready-to-Wear, Pre-Fall) in three different years: 2014, 2015 and 2016. Fashion trends have a great influence on fashion designers' work and on fashion market to make profitable economic decisions.

## 2. Artistic and knitting elements

Designers have used the same artistic elements as fine artists, i.e. painters. The basic artistic elements used in the presented research were: point, line, light-dark and color together with syntactic rules [2, 3]. A combination of different elements and syntactic rules refers to different artistic languages, which have their own artistic grammar, i.e. a different style [4-7]. All three investigated fashion designers used knitting in their collections as a significant element which defined their style. Different knitting technologies as well as different yarns made of synthetic or natural fibers in all color spectra significantly influence the surface of a knitted fabric. Even when the technology is the same, the use of different materials, structures, colors, etc. creates various unique surfaces.

Designers have chosen their own artistic and knitting elements to produce a knitted fabric in accordance with their vision and expression. One of the basic artistic elements is a point, while in knitting, a loop is the basic structure element used in weft and warp knitting. In knitting, an equivalent



for artistic element - line is yarn intermeshed into a knitting course or wale which form a stripe. Different types of loop elements aligned in courses and wales create a surface of a knitted fabric: a texture characterized by shadows and composed of light-dark elements. Color is the element used in different combinations and hues in fine arts as well as in knitting [8]. For final surfaces, plastic variables: height, width, weight, position, direction, number, density, texture, which define the form are important. When these elements are changed, the form changes as well [2-6]. New meanings, and new emotional and sensual characteristics/properties are obtained, e.g. a small square is perceived differently than a big one. Knitting material, knitting machine and knitting process also define the knitted fabrics construction parameters. i.e. the knitted structure and the parameters/dimensions of the basic structure – loop.

**Table1.** Artistic and knitting elements

<b>artistic element</b>	point	line	light-dark	color
<b>knitting element</b>	loop	stripe (knitted course/wale)	texture/structured jacquard (open/close structure, bulge/depression in structure)	color jacquard

### 3. Experimental: defining style in knitting

The method used in the presented research was a style matrix which is developed from the axiomatic system [4,5,6]. Only the part dealing with the language of fine arts and the pictorial speech – the style of a certain designer and a certain work of art/knitted fabric was used. In their collections, the investigated designers used the following knitting/artistic elements: the loop (point), the course/wale stripes (line), knitted texture (light-dark) and colour (colour). All of the designer used primary colours (i.e. red, yellow, blue) and secondary colours (i.e. green, violet, orange) in their collections. They also used the whole colour spectra. The lines were created from stripes in different colours and in different directions (orthogonal, horizontal, zig-zag, diagonal).

Missoni design is known for the colourful, bright, space-dyed and zig-zag patterns. Lines are used to create zig-zag stripes in most of the designs [9].

For Issey Miyake, the pleats remain the fil-rouge of his collections. In his new collections, the backed stretch and 3D steam stretch technology has been used. With this 3D technology, he has created geometrical patterns (snow crystals and hexagon, nature's perfect shape). Miyake's knitted seamless garments have always self-pleated after they have been formed [9].

Sonia Rykiel integrated a lot of sparkly Lurex into her knits; she mostly created jacquard patterns. Her unique style is recognizable by distinctive stripes, the house's signature being rainbow stripes, used horizontally in many occasions [9].



**Figure 1.** Missoni Spring collection 2014, 2015 and 2016



**Figure 2.** Miyake Spring collection 2014, 2015 and 2016



**Figure 3.** Rykiel Spring collection 2014, 2015 and 2016

#### 4. Conclusion

After the selected three designers were examined through all the periods, it was concluded that each designer can be characterised by his own style. All the designers used the same basic elements (loop, yarns, colours, light-dark). All their collections included stripes, knitted structures, similar colours, but each of them used its own knitting technique, which led to stylistic differences among them. Through the periods, individual author could be recognized. The collections of Missoni, Miyake or Rykiel could be unambiguously identified. Despite the influencing fashion trends, all the compared designers still retained their own style, their own techniques, their own inspirations. The same principle of recognizable individual style can be seen in fine art. Fine artists use the same basic elements, but in different combinations to create their own style, reflecting their sentiments, feelings and intentions to present their own vision of reality.

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