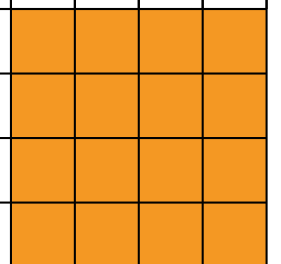
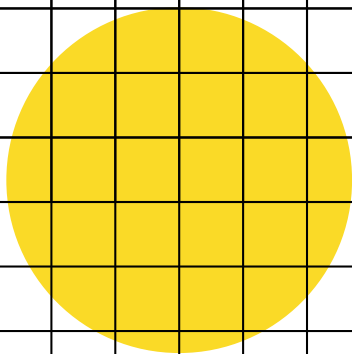
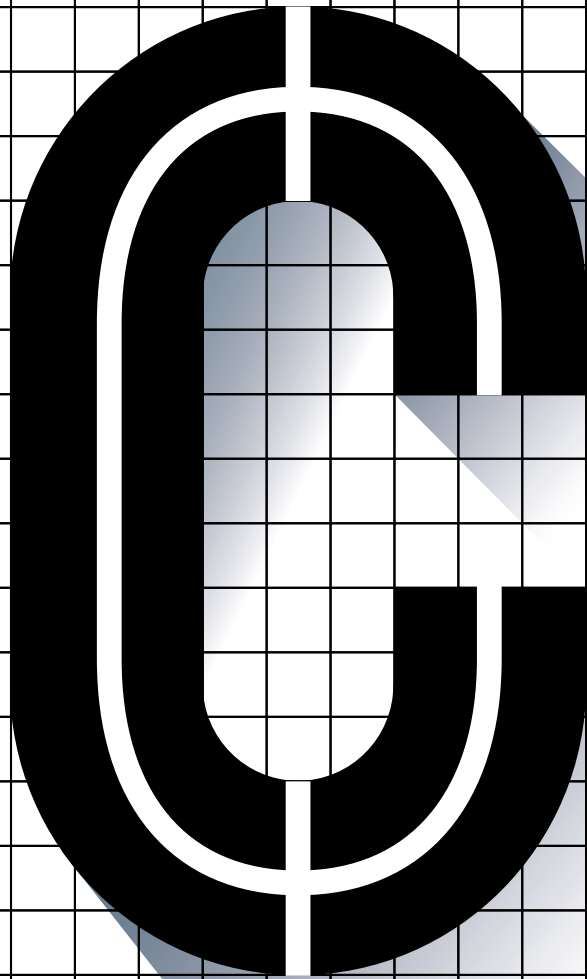
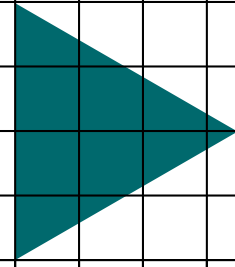


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Fashion Design

GENDERLESS FASHION DESIGN.

ANALYSIS OF THE COLLECTIONS FROM THE FASHION WEEKS OF COPENHAGEN, NEW YORK, LONDON, MILAN AND PARIS. CASE: AUTUMN-WINTER SEASON 2023

Fashion Design - Genderless - Unisex - Garments - Visual language

Abstract. The aim of this study is to analyze the state of genderless fashion design in current fashion weeks. Specifically, a quantitative content analysis was carried out. This was applied to a sample of looks from proclaimed or self-proclaimed genderless firms that have paraded on the five most important western catwalks according to publications such as Vogue, Elle or The New York Times. In this way, it was possible to observe the current state and evolutions that have occurred in western genderless fashion design. This analysis concludes that, even if there are still several fields in which genderless fashion embraces the most discreet, less daring and more utilitarian choices, this fashion is moving away from a merely pragmatic and traditionally masculine approach.

Resumen. El objetivo del presente estudio es analizar el estado del diseño de moda genderless en las pasarelas actuales. Concretamente, se ha realizado un análisis de contenido de tipo cuantitativo. Éste se ha aplicado a una muestra de looks de firmas proclamadas o autoproclamadas genderless que han desfilado en las cinco pasarelas occidentales más importantes según publicaciones como Vogue, Elle o The New York Times. De este modo ha sido posible observar el estado actual y las evoluciones que han ocurrido en el diseño de moda genderless occidental. El análisis permite concluir que, aunque todavía se observan campos en los que la moda genderless abraza las elecciones más discretas, menos atrevidas y más utilitarias, esta moda se está alejando del enfoque meramente pragmático y tradicionalmente masculino.

1. INTRODUCTION AND OBJECTIVES

1.1. JUSTIFICATION

The concept of genderless fashion was a social evolution of unisex fashion. This genderless fashion evolved hand in hand with the new social paradigms of the time, which began to define a person beyond their gender and also began to question preconceived ideas about individuality and expression.

In this way, genderless fashion proposed the use of garments that were not born of or based on garments that had traditionally been assigned a gender, but that could serve as a means

of expression for anyone, regardless of their gender. More than a fashion designed to serve different genders, genderless fashion proposed garments without gender.

However, whether this fashion achieved this objective or not is currently in question. Both fashion analysts and the general public have raised some concerns and given reasons to believe that genderless fashion still has a way to go before reaching its goal.

One of the main arguments that are used to criticize what is currently called genderless fashion, is the possible closeness of this fashion to typically masculine fashion. It is stated that current genderless fashion is fundamentally based on the

lines and types of garments associated with typically masculine fashion. This fact would sacrifice the expression potential that genderless garments should have for a large part of the public, since they are more aimed at the masculine market.

Another strong argument is the perception that current genderless fashion prioritizes the merely functional aspect of clothing, directing the focus on creating garments that can be used to cover the body of any person rather than serving as a means of personal expression.

These current criticisms are the ones that justify carrying out this research, which seeks to analyze the aforementioned points as hypotheses and to propose a genderless fashion that can be separated from the merely masculine and the merely functional in order to glorify the individual.

1.2. STATE OF THE ART

In relation to previous works that have analyzed genderless fashion, we encounter studies on the perception of certain societal groups towards this fashion trend, almost all of which have emerged within the last five years.

In 2020, Dana conducted a “sociocommunicative analysis” studying the history and current status of non-binary fashion as a tool for expression.

Ugarte (2020) examined “Genderless clothing as a form of gender equity communication among students in the Fashion Design and Management program at UPC in Lima today (2020).” According to this study, there is a connection between gender equity and genderless clothing.

For his part, in 2021, Suárez analysed the “Perception of Millennial gay men about genderless fashion in Lima” qualitatively through interviews, through which he concluded that, although the perception of this fashion was positive, it was understood that the country was not ready to leave gender stereotypes aside.

However, there are no studies that analyze the current state of Western genderless fashion on runways. Therefore, this present work aims to provide more information in this field and offer a perspective in the study of current fashion trends.

1.3. HYPOTHESIS

- **Hypothesis 1:** In current genderless fashion design, what is traditionally associated with the masculine gender predominates.
- **Sub-hypothesis 1.1.** In genderless fashion collections, the garments most associated with the male wardrobe prevail, such as pants, shirts and suits.
- **Sub-hypothesis 1.2.** The silhouettes of genderless collections’ looks correspond to those of traditionally masculine fashion, which are mostly rectilinear.
- **Hypothesis 2:** Current genderless fashion prioritizes the functionality over the creation, limiting garments’ capacity of serving as a means of personal expression.
- **Sub-hypothesis 2.1.** Prints and colors within genderless fashion are not varied or remarkable.
- **Sub-hypothesis 2.2.** The fabrics used are characterized by being more utilitarian and typical of everyday garments.
- **Sub-hypothesis 2.3.** The presence of ornaments and fasteners on garments is scarce.
- **Sub-hypothesis 2.4.** The use of accessories and complements is very limited.

1.4. OBJECTIVES

The main objective is:

- **1:** Analyze the current state of genderless fashion design on catwalks
- Other objectives
- **2:** Examine how is genderless design portrayed on the five main catwalks
 - **3:** Check if genderless fashion is close to a fashion associated with a specific gender
 - **4:** Verify if genderless fashion prioritizes the function over the design
 - **5:** Make a methodological proposal for analyzing fashion design

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. CONTENT ANALYSIS: QUANTITATIVE TYPE

According to Krippendorff (1990) “content analysis is a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the context of their use.”

Collado (2003) defined quantitative research as “the method that uses data collection

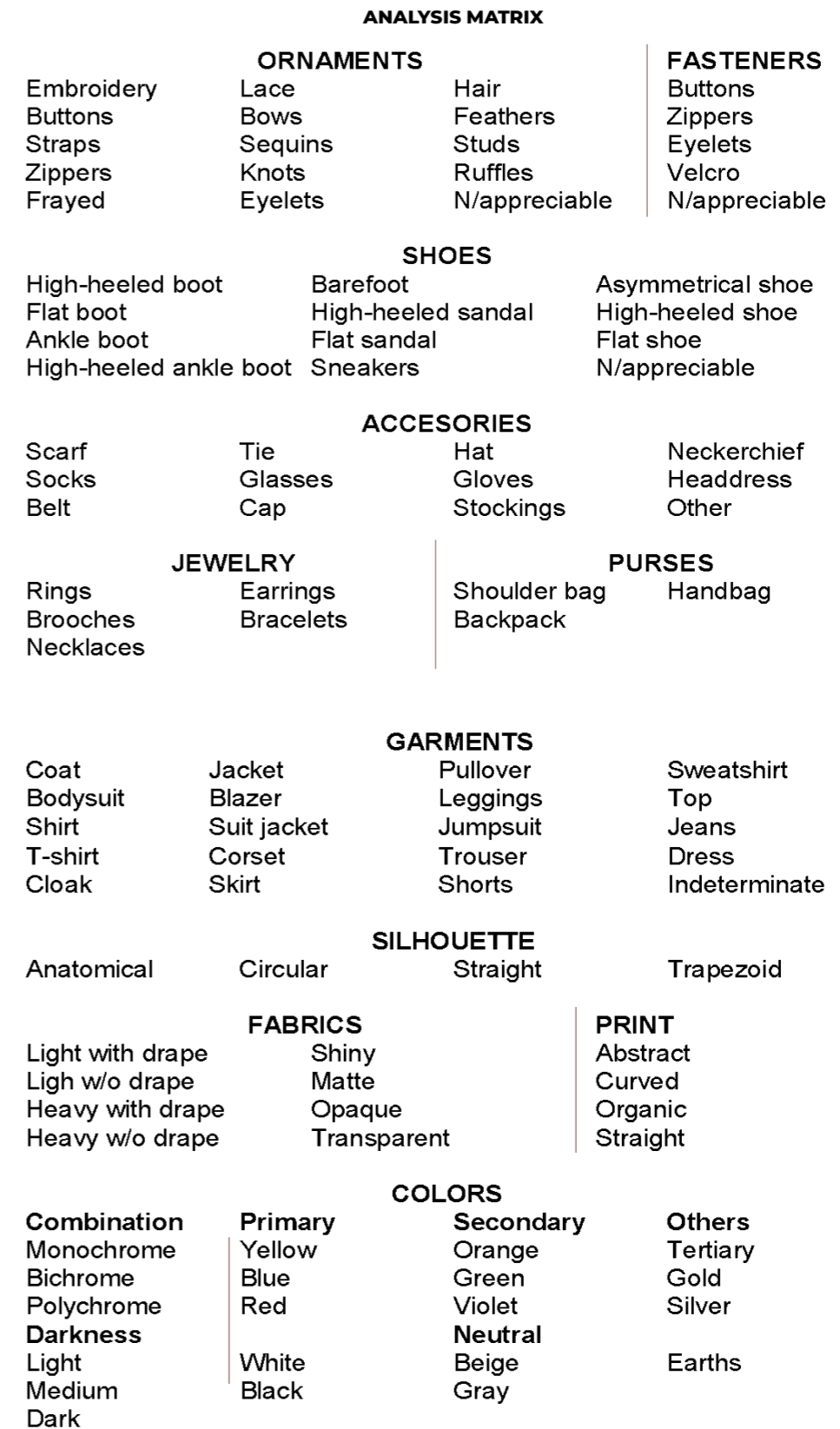


Image 1: Clothing analysis sheet. Own elaboration.

and analysis to answer research questions and test previously established hypotheses, and relies on numerical measurement, counting, and often the use of statistics to accurately establish patterns of behavior in a population”.

2.2. SAMPLE

The quantitative analysis was carried out on looks belonging to the most relevant collections in the genderless fashion field at the main fashion catwalks worldwide. 36 firms were analyzed in the five main fashion weeks, distributed as follows:

- 7 in Copenhagen
- 7 in New York
- 8 in London
- 4 in Milan
- 10 in Paris

Two looks from each collection were analyzed, for a grand total of 72 analyzed looks.

3. RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

All percentages indicate the proportion of looks that include the element or feature in question, unless otherwise indicated.

The most used garment in the analyzed collections is the dress, followed with very little difference by pants. This is very enlightening, as the fact that a garment so traditionally linked to women’s fashion is the protagonist of genderless

fashion is far from sub-hypothesis 1.1, which refers to the prevalence of masculine clothing. It is also especially interesting to see how pants have lost their status as a symbol of virility, as they are presented in a significant way in collections aimed at people of any gender.

Also, despite the season, coats are combined more frequently with shirts than with jackets, sweatshirts or jumpers, as would be expected. Therefore, hypothesis 2 is not fulfilled: “Current genderless fashion prioritizes the functionality over the creation.”

The most prevalent silhouettes are “straight” and “anatomical”. The straight silhouette having such a presence is not surprising, since genderless and unisex are commonly associated with straight shapes that do not define the body. However, and surprisingly, the second most observed silhouette is the anatomical one.

The fact that the anatomical silhouette is reaching the same point as the rectilinear silhouette is especially relevant, since it indicates that genderless design is evolving from a more “simple” and “utilitarian” rectilinear design, towards the appreciation of curves and aesthetics. This data allows us to refute sub-hypothesis 1.2: “The silhouettes of genderless collections’ looks correspond to those of traditionally masculine fashion, which are mostly rectilinear”.

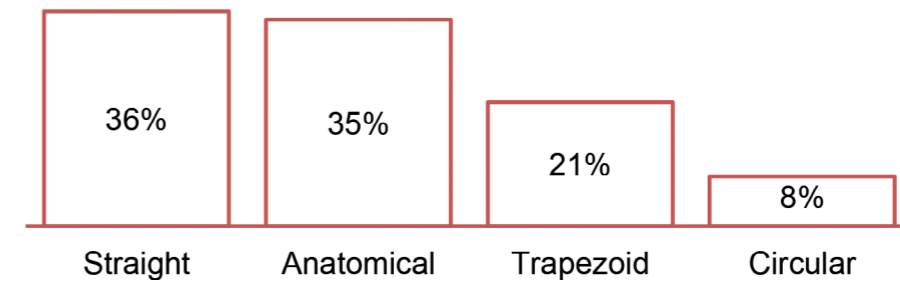
GARMENTS

Dress 36%	Skirt 19%	Pullover 15%		Shirt 13%	
		Blazer 11%	T-shirt 8%	Swe... 6%	
Trouser 28%	Coat 17%		Top 11%	Cloak 4%	Jacket 3%
		Jeans 4%		* 3%	** 1%
					** 1%

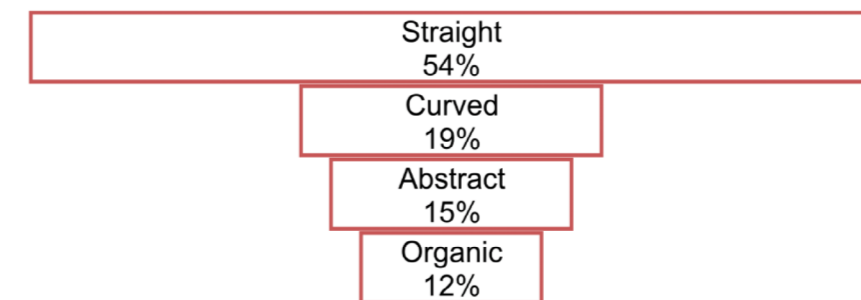
* Shorts

** Corset, Leggins, Suit jacket, Indeterminate

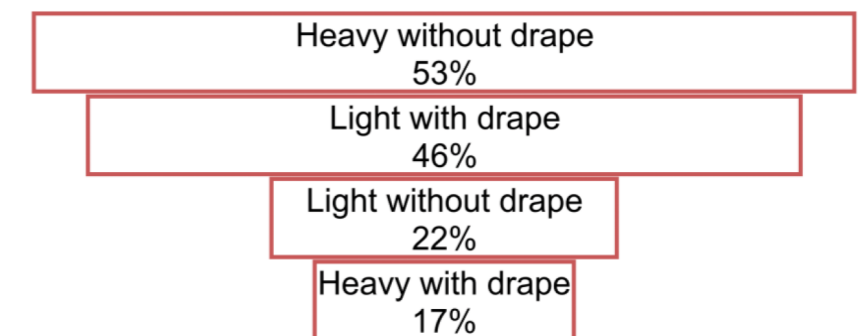
SILHOUETTES



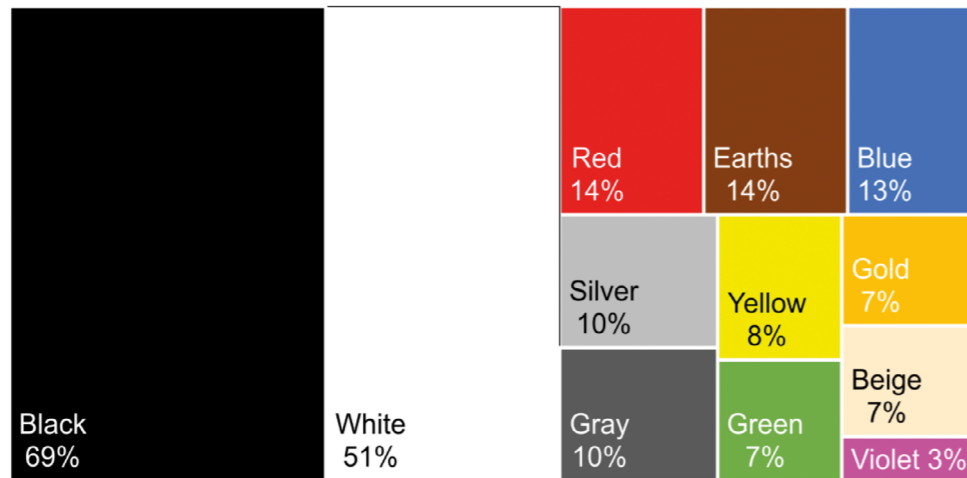
PRINTS



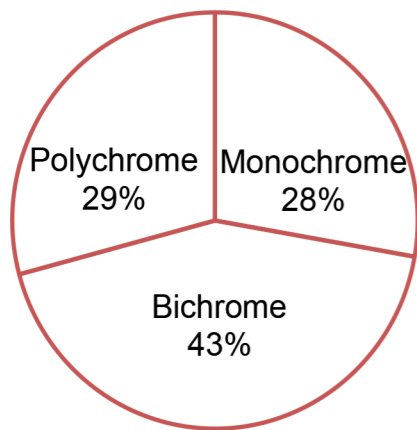
FABRICS



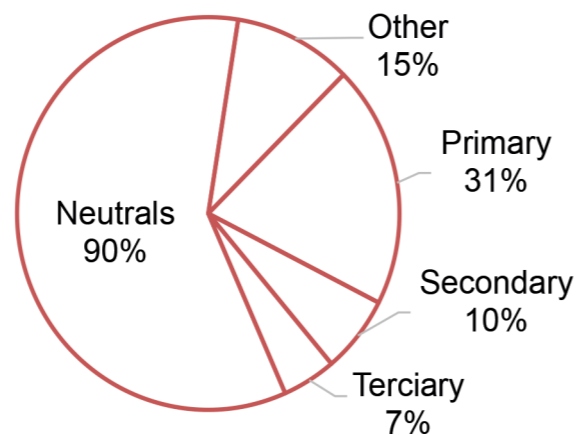
COLORS



COLOR COMBINATIONS



COLOR CATEGORIES



The absence of prints prevails in the analyzed looks. When prints are found, the most common ones are straight. Geometric patterns and straight and angular shapes are associated with little innovation. It is appropriate to consider that geometric and straight shapes transmit coldness, in contrast to curved and organic shapes, which are considered warmer and closer. This fact confirms sub-hypothesis 2.1, which stated that in current genderless fashion prints are not varied or remarkable.

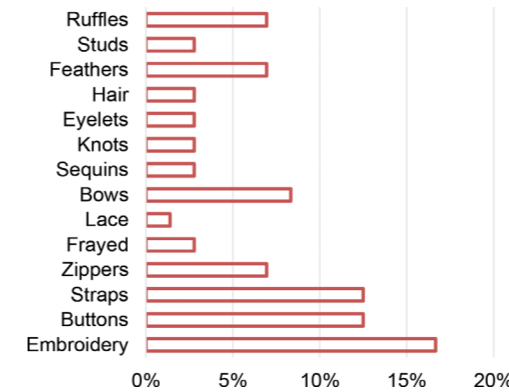
Most garments use heavy fabrics without drape. This was expected for two reasons. In the first place, this kind of fabrics are typical of utilitarian and day-to-day garments in these autumn and winter seasons. Hence, sub-hypothesis 2.2 is fulfilled: "The fabrics used are

characterized by being more utilitarian and typical of everyday garments." Secondly, as expected, heavy fabrics usually have a significant role in the autumn-winter season. However, the strong presence of light fabrics stands out, which seem to be gaining share despite the cold season.

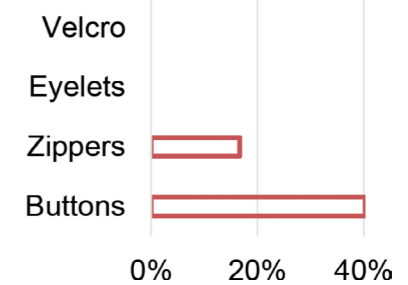
The predominance of two-color combinations and neutral colors (especially black) stands out. This would match sub-hypothesis 2.1: "Prints and colors within genderless fashion are not varied or remarkable", while it is also true that it is a common range of colors in the autumn-winter season.

Traditionally, autumn and winter colors tend to be dark, muted, with blue, black and brown tones, and this coincides with the

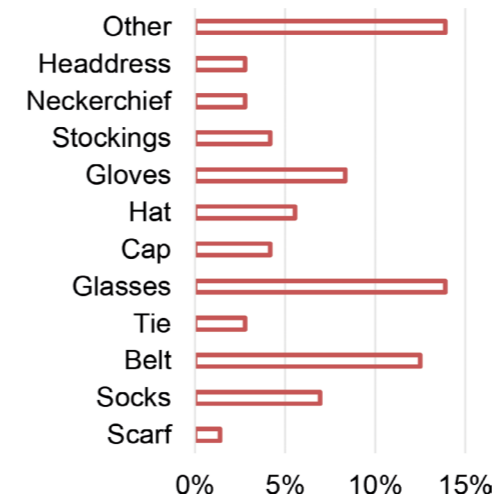
ORNAMENTS



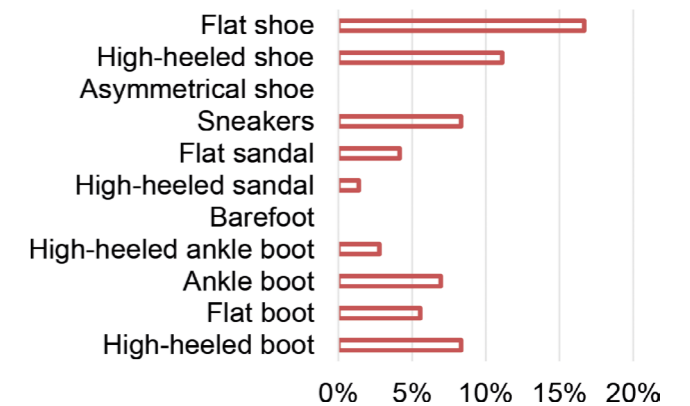
FASTENERS



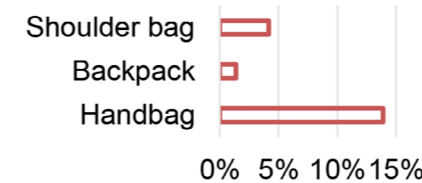
ACCESORIES



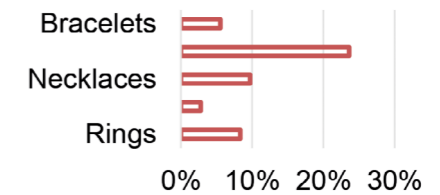
SHOES



PURSES



JEWELRY



analyzed looks. However, we also find a strong presence of white, as well as beige garments and light colors.

Even so, a very discreet palette is seen, in which no purples, oranges or daring color combinations are observed, which also fulfills sub-hypothesis 2.1.

In general, we find few ornaments, following this trend of lack of remarkable and daring garments. When we find ornaments, they are usually embroidery, buttons or straps, closely related to the most established and less innovative trends.

Something similar happens with fasteners.

When we appreciate them, we usually find buttons and zippers, without creative or daring elements, so sub-hypothesis 2.3 is fulfilled: "The presence of ornaments and fasteners on garments is scarce."

A relevant presence of high-heeled footwear is observed, whether in boots or shoes. Something very significant considering that the heeled shoe is more common in the female public.

As for other accessories, handbags predominate (when there are bags) as well as necklaces and rings (when there is jewelry).

It is noteworthy that we did find originality and creativity in all the accessories - heels,

bags and jewelry- which allows us to refute hypothesis 2.4: “The use of accessories and complements is very limited”, as we observe an increase in these accent elements in the analyzed collections.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

In short, the quantitative analysis shows us that, although there are still several fields in which genderless fashion embraces the most discreet, less daring and more utilitarian choices, an evolution can be observed in terms of garments and accessories. It seems that genderless fashion is moving towards including creativity and fearlessness in its designs, moving away from the merely pragmatic.

CONFIRMED HYPOTHESES:

- **2.1.** Prints and colors within genderless fashion are not varied or remarkable.
- **2.2.** The fabrics used are characterized by being more utilitarian and typical of everyday garments.
- **2.3.** The presence of ornaments and fasteners on garments is scarce.

REFUTED HYPOTHESES:

- **1.** In current genderless fashion design, what is traditionally associated with the masculine gender predominates.
- **1.1.** In genderless fashion collections, the garments most associated with the male wardrobe prevail, such as pants, shirts and suits.
- **1.2.** The silhouettes of genderless collections' looks correspond to those of traditionally masculine fashion, which are mostly rectilinear.
- **2.** Current genderless fashion prioritizes the functionality over the creation, limiting garments' capacity of serving as a means of personal expression.
- **2.4.** The use of accessories and complements is very limited.

OBJECTIVES

The main objective, which was to analyze the current state of genderless fashion design on catwalks, was successfully accomplished.

Other objectives were:

- **2:** Examine how is genderless design portrayed on the five main catwalks
- **3:** Check if genderless fashion is close to a fashion associated with a specific gender

- **4:** Verify if genderless fashion prioritizes the function over the design
- **5:** Make a methodological proposal for analyzing fashion design

All these objectives were also accomplished with the results of the investigation through the methodology used for the research and with the analysis sheet created and used to analyze the looks.

3.1. PERSONAL APPRAISAL

In the first place, the quantitative methodology has been adequate in this study since it has allowed the analysis of the necessary elements to achieve the objectives of the research.

Secondly, given the time limitations typical of an End of Degree Project, only a quantitative analysis has been carried, but it could be interesting for future research to complement this with a qualitative analysis.

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