

Inclusive Fashion

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Inclusivity in fashion is a multifaceted and continually evolving concept, shaped by shifting cultural and historical contexts. In recent years, heightened societal awareness around diversity has prompted a redefinition of beauty standards, challenging entrenched norms and expanding representation across body types, physical conditions, ages, racial and ethnic identities, gender expressions. This expansion is increasingly including disability and its intersection with other forms of social exclusion.

The democratization of fashion, alongside the hypermediatization of visual content, has reshaped the fashion ecosystem, amplifying new voices, diversifying aesthetic norms, and prompting questions about how fashion is communicated and how brands engage with inclusivity. However, these same mechanisms have also perpetuated exclusion and reinforced systemic inequalities. While the relentless circulation of visual content opens up space for alternative representations, it often reproduces normative standards and commodifies difference. As a result, the promise of inclusivity oscillates between genuine transformation and performative gestures. This evolving landscape fuels activist movements that demand greater visibility for marginalized bodies — particularly those marked by disability — while encouraging deeper reflection on care, embodiment, and vulnerability. These movements challenge dominant narratives and advocate for more socially reflective representations in campaigns, runway shows, and design practices. Such transformations have reverberated within academic discourse, scholars in fashion studies are increasingly adopting interdisciplinary and critically engaged approaches to explore fashion's cultural significance and societal role. They are rethinking how fashion is taught, embracing pedagogies that foreground inclusivity and critical thinking preparing future professionals to navigate and reshape the complex social narratives embedded within the fashion system.

The Zonemoda Journal issue *Inclusive Fashion* brings together a range of contributions that explore inclusivity from multiple perspectives, drawing attention to its diverse implications and transformative potential. In the cluster of articles chosen by the editors to explore inclusive fashion education, the contribution by Julie Gork, Vidmina Stasiulytė, Sugandha Gupta, explores multisensory approaches to fashion education as a means to foster inclusion and innovation, challenging visual-centric norms and promoting embodied knowledge through practices informed by fashion, sensory, and disability studies. Meanwhile, the article by Eda Sanchez-Persampieri, explores culturally inclusive case studies as a

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pedagogical strategy to promote equity, critical engagement, and intersectional awareness in fashion curricula. In her article Sara Kaufman presents a case study of a collaborative design project involving students and individuals with disabilities. She highlights how co-creation can foster visibility and accessibility, as well as a more human-centered approach to fashion pedagogy. Shifting the focus from education to media as a vehicle for inclusivity, Veronica Innocenti's article examines how fashion operates as a tool of resistance and identity-building within lifestyle television. It also critically addresses the tensions between the show's pedagogical ambitions and its entanglement in global commercial circuits. Offering a digital media perspective on inclusivity, Ben Barry and Daniel Drak's article explores how disabled players use game modifications to create inclusive fashion representations, framing digital dress as a site of resistance, creativity, and community-building within virtual spaces. As previously noted, the representation of difference mediated through the consumption of images is a crucial aspect: Chiara Tessariol's article offers a critical perspective on how fashion imagery regulates access to visibility, arguing that inclusion often relies on aesthetic containment rather than genuine transformation. Another compelling perspective on inclusivity comes from Diana Mounayer's article, which examines the fashion industry's treatment of religious diversity through the case of Halima Aden. The article critiques performative inclusivity and advocates for co-design practices that center marginalized voices — particularly Muslim consumers — as a path towards genuine transformation. Closing this issue on reimagining the study fashion in a more inclusive way, Ilaria Caielli's article offers a radical critique of the fashion system through the lens of Disability Studies, proposing a methodology for rethinking aesthetic canons and digital historiography via practices of radical visibility and algorithmic resistance.

To complete this issue, several scholars have contributed with short responses, reviews, and interviews that enrich the conversation on inclusive fashion. In the Backstage section, Cirus Rinaldi reviews the Italian volume *Oltre il Canone*, an updated and extended version of the original French *Tu es Canon*, including the Italian translation of the *Inclusive Fashion Manifesto*, already available in other languages. This publication was supported by the *Culture Fashion and Communication* research centre of the University of Bologna and is part of the centre's cluster of ongoing activities dedicated to inclusive fashion, such as this issue. In the reviews section, Elisa Fulco examines Kate-Annett Hitchcock's *The Intersection of Fashion and Disability: A Historical Analysis*, while Christel Arnevik reflects on the Victoria and Albert Museum's exhibition *Design and Disability* (London, June 2025–February 2026), which reframes disability as a source of creativity and cultural transformation. Elysia Ng contributes a review of *Crippling Masculinity: Designing Fashion Utopias*, exhibited at Tangled Art + Disability (March 10–May 12, 2023). Denis Domenichetti and Filippo Maria Disperati offer an insightful exploration of how two Italian designers are reshaping contemporary Italian fashion through inclusive and emotionally resonant portrayals of identity and the body. Finally, Mariella Lorusso presents an exclusive interview with Ben Barry — as he states: “I strive to intervene into the fashion system and redesign it to centre inclusion and decolonization — creating a future in which bodies that are currently stigmatized and excluded are instead valued and desired.”

This issue, rich with insights on inclusivity, aims to inspire future research and contribute meaningfully to the growing body of work dedicated to redefining the field of fashion studies.