


Manual Knitting: Who knits a stitch, weaves a tale

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ABSTRACT

The manual art of knitted fabric construction, which is called knitting, consists of interlacing a thread or more threads together, with the use of a pair of needles or two ferrules connected by a thread, this tool being known as circular needle and which form fabrics with lacy, smooth or voluminous textures. The aim is to present hand knitting and its relevance to fashion in the historical and social context. The relevance of the research, aims to know the dissemination of manual knitting as a technique and fashion product to the entire Brazilian territory, the research is classified as being of a basic nature, qualitative research, narrative, carried out by literature review with data analysis and discussions. The results of the research indicated that: handicrafts and manual knitting, presented in this study, are segments of expressive value for fashion because it is an artisan widely used in the manufacture of clothing and because it crosses historical moments and is present in the contemporary period. Handicrafts reflect cultural and social identity that are quite attractive in theoretical concepts. Manual knitting indicates a vast unfolding of studies to be developed to notice the creative and authorial expression present in fashion design with evidence both in academia and in society.

Keywords: Knitting, Crafts, Textile, Artisan, Art.

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INTRODUCTION

Knitting presents technical possibilities in the construction of knitted fabrics in a manual way, which is the subject of this study. This ancient technique, even with the evolution of textile technology, is present in society with regard to affective memory, leisure habit and source of financial income. Manual knitting makes it possible for the person who knits to reproduce an authorial designer through instructions present in recipes for knitting pieces and with constant practice, creative autonomy can manifest itself and the individual becomes the author of their knitting pieces, whether it is a fashion or decoration product.

In manual knitting there is a wide variety of techniques, operational practices and variations of stitches for its execution, such as, for example, seamless blouses and the making of shawls with different geometric shapes.

Manual knitting is not very widespread in part of the Brazilian territory, where its low adherence to the textile arts is perceived. In the contemporary context, it is understood that manual knitting, in Brazil, is little studied in the academic field and scientific material on the subject is scarce (Martins, 2015). There is little technical, popular and easy-to-understand literature on the subject regarding the varieties of manual knitting techniques, what is found for consumption are authorial works by foreign designers and with their translation carried out by professionals, who mostly have no knowledge of the artisanal practice and who do not know the technical and specific terms related to knitting. in most cases.

The present study aims to present manual knitting and its relevance to fashion in the historical and social context. The importance of research is highlighted, considering that knowing concepts and theories related to manual knitting can give greater evidence to handicrafts and manual making. From this perspective, manual knitting can stand out as a textile technique in the field of craftsmanship and art due to its originality and notoriety, since each piece is unique (Sennet, 2009).

Considering the low representativeness of handmade knitting both in society and in academic productions, this study brings the theme to the knowledge scenario in order to contribute to stimulate more studies on manual knitting. The research is classified as being of a basic nature. The methodological procedures for the construction of this research are of a qualitative nature with a theoretical narrative, carried out by literature review. Netnography by consulting databases in academic libraries, *websites* and *blogs* that deal with the subject. The following theories are discussed: Handicrafts and manual knitting.

CRAFTSMANSHIP

The origin of handicrafts has a linear connection with human origin, as the traces of the first handmade objects date from 6,000 B.C., approximately Neolithic period, when human beings began



to have their needs met and began to transform raw materials of animal, vegetable or mineral origin that were at their disposal such as creating baskets, sculpting stones, making leather garments, molding clay, among others (Machado, 2016).

The construction or materialization of artifacts, originating from the creative ideas stored in our human brain, is expressed by manual skills. In this way,

Handicrafts can be understood as any productive activity of objects and artifacts made manually, or with the use of traditional or rudimentary means, with skill, dexterity, technical refinement, ingenuity and art (Neto, 1996, p. 3).

In the nineteenth century, handicraft workshops were spaces for small groups of apprentices to live together with the master-craftsman who had the technical knowledge. They offered teaching, clothing, and food in exchange for cheap and loyal labor (Holanda, 2009). Handicrafts are present in affective memories because they manifest memories referring to experiences that can be individual or collective and are re-signified in the present (Le Goff, 1996).

The artisanal activity presents a cultural and regional identity in which the characteristics reveal customs and traditions. For example, indigenous handicraft activities with the use of natural pigments through the art of painting work the art of ceramics, basketry, sarongs, make headdresses and garments with feathers and feathers of birds (Castilho *et al.* 2017).

Brazil's cultural diversity sees in handicrafts the possibility of contributing to the development of social projects, such as small cooperatives, design and fashion, which can stimulate the improvement of the quality of life of the poorest populations and contribute to their empowerment, which can contribute to the reduction of poverty (UNESCO, 2019).

CRAFT CONCEPTS

The word handicraft, according to Becker (2014), has its genesis from art and corresponds to the French neologism *Artisanat*, which, around the year 1920, appears for the first time in France by Julião Sourcegne, as reported by José Pereira (1979) and Jorge Chitti (2003). In the Portuguese language,

it was only from 1940 onwards that the word handicraft began to appear in dictionaries, in smaller entries than the New Dictionary of the Portuguese Language by Sérgio Buarque de Holanda: Handicraft – 1. The technique, the training or the art of the craftsman. 2. The set or class of craftsmen. 3. Product of the craftsman's labor, 4. A place where handicrafts are practiced or taught (Pereira, 1979, p. 97).

Handicrafts, as a concept, which accompanied the evolution of humanity and the objects created by artisans and workers who were in the industries direct us to a reflection for a communication that is not verbalized. Thus, "handicrafts are loaded with meanings, imprinted in their



colors, shapes and textures" (Nazario, 2010, p. 15). The word handicraft, both as a term, theory and concept, has been gaining different meanings and interpretations. The work of the artisan and the artist in the contemporary moment seeks to present differentials such as innovation, creativity and sophistication based on the definitions of craftsmanship and its reflections on society.

The concepts addressed regarding handicrafts show the commercial objective imbued in this activity from the perspective of a source of family income. However, artisans are self-employed and do not have employment relationships. They participate in all stages of the artifact's production, from obtaining the raw material to the finished product (Santos, 2007). The definitions of craftsmanship that are expressed in literature lead us to consider the roots of human activity, such as this reflection:

To conceptualize craftsmanship with a minimum of rationality, it is necessary to delve into the human odyssey and make a new reading of history, which determined cultures; fears; that have driven change; survival strategies; learning challenges; the forms of domination and division of labor; and, finally, the artifices for the design and construction of time itself.

To devise a concept of craftsmanship that is minimally rational, it is essential to immerse oneself in the human journey and reinterpret history. This reinterpretation must consider the various aspects that have shaped cultures: the fears that have catalyzed change, the survival tactics adopted, the challenges encountered in the learning process, the different forms of domination and division of labor. Finally, it is crucial to understand the methods used in the conception and construction of the notion of time (Marinho, 2007, p. 03).

Following this objection, Cordola (2003) considers handicrafts as a form of human expression, the result of the creative work of the artisan, encompassed in its usefulness and in all the present cultural expression.

The evolution of craftsmanship is oscillating rather than linear. Regardless of expressive or insignificant appreciation, it resists, exists and always exists in different environments and societies as a cultural identifier or record of historical and temporal milestones.

The evolution of society in which time and technological resources have made art and craftsmanship accompany this journey. In contemporary society, handicrafts are seen as a social and cultural manifestation, since in Brazil they have a remarkable recognition. Thus, some definitions in governmental spheres such as the Conceptual Base of Brazilian Handicrafts, Unesco and SEBRAE, which published their authorial definitions in 2010. These definitions contemplate the craftsmanship that encompasses art in this context. The following are the standardizations proposed by Ordinance SCS/MDIC No. 29 of 10.05.2010 with the following definition:

Art. 4 HANDICRAFTS - Handicrafts comprise all the production resulting from the transformation of raw materials, with manual predominance, by an individual who has full mastery of one or more techniques, combining creativity, skill and cultural value (it has symbolic value and cultural identity), and in the process of its activity there may be the limited assistance of machines, tools, artifacts and utensils.



During the 1997 International Symposium/ICC, the definition established by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) states that:

Handmade products are those made by artisans, either entirely by hand, with the use of tools, or even by mechanical means, as long as the direct manual contribution of the artisan remains the most substantial component of the finished product. These pieces are produced without restriction in terms of quantity and with the use of raw materials from sustainable resources. The special nature of handicraft products derives from their distinct characteristics, which can be utilitarian, aesthetic, artistic, creative, cultural, and symbolic and significant from a social point of view" (Borges, 2011, p. 21).

SEBRAE's standard database presents the following definitions of the terms mentioned above in their own terms:

Handicrafts: Based on the concept proposed by the World Handicraft Council, handicrafts are defined as any productive activity that results in finished objects and artifacts, made manually or with the use of traditional or rudimentary means, with skill, dexterity, quality and creativity.

The social transformations experienced by humanity impacted the life of the artisan and the concepts about handicrafts were acquiring theoretical and practical foundations with aesthetics distinct from art. The craftsman and the artist meet in the definition of the terminology of the word **craftsman** (emphasis added). The craftsman is the subject who understands, understands and performs a task effectively, for example, a person who paints on canvas, a person who knits and other artists and craftsmen in their technical variables. The intimate relationship between the hand and the head favors the good craftsman the possibility of detecting and solving problems and thus breaking new ground (Sennett, 2009).

Other nomenclatures besides the craftsman, for the person endowed with motor skills, whether for any type of construction or making of objects that become wearable or utilitarian products, are known as artist or craftsman. Both have the same purpose: to create and to execute. This is regardless of the type of art or craft you propose to do.

Ordinance No. 1,007 (2018) of the Brazilian Handicrafts Program, provides in Article 8 on the profession of the artisan:

It is any individual who, individually or collectively, makes use of one or more techniques in the exercise of a predominantly manual trade, through the integral mastery of processes and techniques, transforming raw material into a finished product that expresses Brazilian cultural identities (MDIC, 2018, p. 3).

Chart 1 presents some elements that are important points to understand the creative segment of handicrafts during its production, according to DJau *et al.* (2012, p. 4).



The same part is produced in small quantities.

Manuality	Manual labor is predominant and the use of tools and machines is restricted;
Practicality	Crafts must have a practical, utilitarian, accessible and tangible use;
Typicality	Having a history and being legitimized by society, tradition and culture;
Three-dimensionality	It refers to durability and volume; durability excludes typical foods and volume excludes embroideries and designs with no functional application;
Small-scale serialization	The same piece is produced in small quantities.

Source: Adaptado de DJau *et al.* (2012, p.4).

In this way, handicrafts present itself as an activity with production in small series, on a regular basis that generates similar and differentiated products expressing the creativity and skills of the artisan, unlike industrial products. As it is manual work, creativity is presented by those who discover new solutions to their problems on a daily basis and make it possible to innovate products and work processes (Corrêa, 2021).

The creation, reproduction, reinterpretation, resignification of the artisanal or industrial product, can awaken in the artist and artisan their creativity to create their own objects with their artistic identity and make unique craftsmanship. The work of the artist and craftsman directs a distinct look to two concepts with the same essence. The dialogue between the artist's craft and the craftsman presented by D'ávila (1977) says that,

In more developed countries there is an organization closer to the industry. Here we confuse artist with craftsman. The artist has the creative capacity. The craftsman has a great knowledge of the *metier*, without, however, the ability to create. If you have it, you're an artist too. [...] In the Second World War, when European industries were experiencing a crisis situation, it was through the handicraft industries that they remade themselves (1977 apud Makowiecky. 2013. p. 7).

Thus, the function with the craftsmanship of the craftsman and the artist have the same meaning and are not far apart. They have the power of information and knowledge to collaborate with any and all methods of craftsmanship and new techniques arise from this principle. The creative process of each artist or craftsman has a unique style. The creations involve rational and emotional aspects, since the rational expresses skill and dexterity and the emotional that is presented by intuition and inspiration (Linke; Old. p. 24, 2010).

In view of the concepts presented, it is noted the relevance of the creativity of the artisan in the process of producing the artifacts in line with the regional culture and history. In this sense, craftsmanship and creativity are then addressed.

CRAFTSMANSHIP AND CREATIVITY

The concept of creativity presents a wide range of definitions in which different authors present their terminologies in different forms. This term is used when referring to the development of unusual things and concepts, the creation of something new, innovation or related to an



unconventional proposal. According to Ostrower (2010, p. 12), "creativity is a heritage of all human beings".

When reflecting on the literal meaning of the word "creativity", it is noted that it connects with the concept of "creating". That is, to do something or something real; make connections not established by the subject who is the author of the idea, in order to solve an identified problem. Thus, this term can correlate with the subject who creates, has an impact on the psychological aspects of the subject and on the repertoire of previous knowledge acquired. It is also possible to relate it to the interferences of the environment, that is, the social, cultural and educational issues of the person who creates (Novaes, 1980).

Creativity presents a transformative and symbolic character related to the theme of this study, which consists of the transformation of meters of yarn wound in the shape of a ball for the creation of an artifact with the help of tools known as knitting needles. As Ostrower (1987, p. 12) reports: "As intuitive processes, the processes of creation are intimately intertwined with our sentient being. Even in the conceptual or intellectual realm, creation is articulated mainly through sensibility."

The similarity between art and crafts presents dissonance when seeking limits between them as well as word, term or concept because both can be expressed in different contexts and singular purposes. What makes the connection between these two fields of knowledge is creativity. Creating is an attitude that is appreciated through the concepts of art and craftsmanship.

Creativity, in relation to art and craftsmanship, provokes the creative capacity in moments that awaken lapse of ideas, which may or may not be innovative, which is known as *insight*. A term coined by Georges de Mestral (1907-1990), a Swiss engineer, who was hiking through the mountains of the Swiss Alps accompanied by his dog and burs adhered to the animal's fur and clothes. Observing what happened, Mestral took advantage of a creative opportunity and related her already acquired knowledge with a new idea and developed Velcro (Rodrigues, 2011).

Handicrafts is an area of knowledge in which creativity is very remarkable. The artisan with constant practice of his craft, at some point begins to have *insights* in which his ideas added to his creativity start to materialize his authorial creation. Ostrower (2010) states that, "as intuitive processes, the processes of creation are intimately intertwined with our sentient being. Even in the conceptual or intellectual realm, creation is articulated mainly through sensibility" (Ostrower 2010, p. 12).

In addition to the concepts and definitions already mentioned, it is emphasized that the relationship between handicrafts and creativity points to the relationship between handicrafts and fashion in the contemporary context addressed in the following topic.

CRAFTSMANSHIP AND FASHION

The relationship between handicrafts, fashion and design is close despite the fact that they are part of different manufacturing sectors, as they allow economic and social phenomena to be expressed, especially in cultural products/objects of possession. As presented in the Figure 1 - Round Puff with Knitting Cover, the round puff referring to this context indicates that it is not always easy to determine the boundary between craftsmanship, fashion and design regarding the imbrication of this triad in this product (Sasaoka, 2017).

Figure 1 - Round Puff with Knitting Cover



Source: Elo 7. Available at: <https://www.elo7.com.br/puff-redondo-com-capa-em-trico/dp/C995C2>

The socioeconomic context of transition that marked the nineteenth century makes the division between manual or artisanal production remarkable. The pace of accelerated production favors massification, as far as fashion is concerned, it is notable to pay greater attention to the meaning that artifacts present to the consumer public and, in many cases, aesthetic issues prevail over the functionality of the products or services sold in the market (Beltrão, 2022).

During a long period of industrial production, he did not care about the factory employees who, from being artisans, became another cog in the sector, marked with low pay and poor working conditions (Dantas, 2020).

According to Harari (2018), in 1848, millions of people were losing their jobs in the countryside and going to work in factories in big cities. [...] And, if they found work in a textile industry, they could expect to remain in that profession for the rest of their lives (Harari, 2018, p. 232).



The presence of machines in the period marked by the Industrial Revolution led to the devaluation of handicrafts, work was divided into sectors that directed labor to specific functions (Dantas 2020). Thus, workers did not participate in all stages of the manufacturing process, which is now called the assembly line (Harari, 2018).

In this same period, handicrafts were discredited in society as a result of the Industrial Revolution, the *Arts and Crafts movement took place*.

The objective of this movement was to revalue manual work and rescue the aesthetic appearance of objects produced by industry for everyday use, that is, the movement proposes the rescue of the artification of utensils present in the life of the individual. The architect Augustus W. Northmore Pugin (1812-1852) was the author of the moral aesthetic basis of the *Arts and Crafts movement*, in which he proposed to reunify the role of the artist and craftsman as it happened in the Middle Ages (Tagliari; Gallo, 2007).

The art critic Jhon Ruskin (1819-1900), inspired by Pugin, recorded through writing the participation of nature as inspiration and instruction for artists and architects. Painter and writer William Morris (1834-1896) was a leader of the *Arts and Crafts movement* that was influenced by Ruskin's written works. According to Tagliari and Gallo (2007), it is important to point out that,

Ironically, the movement was successful only among large and wealthy industrialists, who could afford the more exclusive services of these artists and architects. Morris was against the use of machines and industrialization in the process of building works of art (Tagliari and Gallo, 2007, p. 633).

Reflect on the premise that the proposals presented by the *Arts and Crafts movement* insert a character of exclusivity to the artifacts produced, since a restricted public represented by the elite of contemporary society at the time had the economic purchasing power to access the service proposals by artists and architects. This makes the *Arts and Crafts movement* important for the understanding between the connection between the industrial product and the artisanal product, since the product manufactured by the industry uses the artistic elaboration made manually and increases its symbolic value. Thus, artists and craftsmen regain their notoriety.

The creative process of each artist or craftsman has a unique style. "Creations involve rational and emotional aspects, since the rational expresses skill and dexterity and the emotional that presents itself through intuition and inspiration" (Linke; Old. p. 24, 2010). Manual artifacts imprint unique characteristics and even if an object is replicated several times by the same person, one does not come out the same as the other. Each object made with distinct characteristics expresses an identity known as style.

The style present in the field of craftsmanship is a revealing point to which the identity of the artisan is expressed. Each artisan has an identification with his technique and his style develops as he

improves in the exercise of his handcraft. The originality and exclusivity of the handmade product makes the artisan recognized as an artist when the handmade product presents its own aesthetic creativity in which market value and consumer desire are added. According to Baxter (1998), the style for the product is defined as follows:

Style is the artistic part of the product. But that doesn't mean total freedom of creation. Styling should be opportunity-driven, and that means there are certain constraints, just like with other phases of product development. Opportunities and constraints to style are of two kinds. First, it is necessary to consider the context of the market, where the product is to be placed. [...] Second, there are certain particularities of style, intrinsic to the product itself, that should not be disrespected (Baxter, 1998, p. 149).

The handcraft materialized in the form of a product has the style as a symbolic record manifested in the concrete object as a form of expression of the artisan. In fashion, handicrafts are established as an item of refinement and ornamentation, which adds value to the piece with an appearance of exclusivity and sophistication. Gomes and Araújo (2013) explain that "a fashion product, whether totally handmade or not, must be made explicit to the consumer so that he understands how all the production took place and can give due value to the product purchased, assuring him the role of creation of the artisan" (Gomes and Araújo, 2013, p.4).

Figure 2 presents style as a concept referring to the work presented and the visual creative identity present in the product. The following figures show how handicrafts serve audiences with different desires and needs. Figure 2 shows designer Stephen West⁶ with one of his knitted designs.

Figura 2 - Starflake Shawl



Source: site [westknits.com](https://www.westknits.com) (2023).

⁶ Stephen West is an American knitting designer currently living in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. Website: <https://www.westknits.com/> Accessed: 24 nov. 2023.



Her pieces have unique identities and the patterns, which we also know as recipes, are available for sale on her website for reproductions by those who identify with the work of sophisticated appearance and execution that requires practice and affinity with knitting craftsmanship. The handmade knitting works that are proposed by Stephen West, have this singular, innovative style with notorious design. As Baxter (1998) mentions, "style is not something that can be injected into the product at a certain stage and should not be added to it at the end of development. The style must be elaborated throughout the product development process" (Baxter, 1998, p. 46).

The visual identity of the work presented by Stephen West manifests reflections on how style is a determining concept for the identity of the work, whether artistic or artisanal.

Fashion related to handicrafts in the context of knitting is reflected on a theme present in contemporary reality that is presented as the name of *slow fashion*. *Slow fashion* is expressed by the reduced and non-mass production of the same object and derives from *slow design*, and the slowing down of fashion dialogues linearly with artisanal craftsmanship. The aesthetics of exclusivity and ornamental artistic elaborations present in fashionable craftsmanship is what adds symbolic and material value to a piece that requires hours and days to be finished (Crane, 2011).

When situating knitting, the object of study of this work, which is a popular handicraft in different geographical regions, it is common to observe in the person who knits the affective relationship with this handicraft. The designer places much of his identity in the authorship of his handmade product and awakens the desire for consumption, as the thought is expressed, "thinking about creating emotional bonds can be a way of prolonging the life of a product, as opposed to planned obsolescence" (Fabri; Rodrigues, 2016, p. 9).

Handicrafts as a mode of material representation of human existence, in which handicrafts are presented as a prominent craftsmanship, argues that when the handicraft technique has a marked and positive presence in human evolution, it endures. Manual knitting, which has undergone a process of automation and followed the oscillating movements of the evolution of handicrafts as a means of production of goods and services such as the manufacture of products and the training of labor, proposes to consider that some habits become permanent in the daily social life of the human.

The path of handicrafts in the evolution of humanity in which it goes through moments of crisis and devaluation, as already seen before, presents a significant appreciation in contemporary time, because the need for exclusivity for consumption that envisions innovation along with creativity that are very expressive factors in handicrafts are very evident in manual knitting.

MANUAL TRICK

The origin of hand knitting is uncertain, and there are no primary sources that date and confirm an exact historical period with regional geographical reference and a probable author of this

handicraft (Ehrlich, *et al*, 1989). What is known is that this artisanal work was widely used for the manufacture of clothing and decorative utilities. The oldest knitting-looking piece ever found, such as a sock⁷ from the third century A.D. Figure 3, which is in London in the collection of the Victoria and Albert museum in which this artifact being exposed to the Carbon-14 test⁸ points to information pertaining to the great Roman Empire.

Figure 3 - Textile stocking (fragment) at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London



Source: Virtual Collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum – London (2006)

The technique of making this piece is known as *naalbinding* and uses only one needle instead of two as it is in traditional knitting (Martins, 2015).

The first knitting garments, for the most part, were made of cotton and in the fourth century this technique became more widespread. However, the so-called cotton route was given rise and natural wool appears as a material option. The cotton route, in context and geography, contributed to the relations between North Africa, the Middle East and Europe (Martins, 2015).

To know the instigating origin of manual knitting is to contemplate how this technique was present in the lives of individuals and how creativity developed through the manual technique. The fragments of knitted fabric are scattered in several museums around the world. Hand knitting went through an extensive period of stagnation, as about six hundred years until the 14th century. During this period, Spain was under Arab domination (Bertolucci, 2018).

The spread of knitting throughout Europe is expressed by the record of art, in which in the painting *knitting Madonna*⁹ Figure 4, authored by the painter Bertram Von Mindem as the main work that portrays the representation of knitting from this historical period.

⁷ Link: <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O128867/textile-fragment-unknown/> Acesso em 25 nov. 2023.

⁸ The Carbon 14 technique makes it possible to date the exact origin of the object.

⁹ Available at: <https://www.bildindex.de/document/obj00040321?medium=XKH145294&part=7> Accessed on: 25 nov. 2023.

Figure 4 - Visita do Anjo (knitting Madonna 1400-1410)



Source: Image Index: Art & Architecture (2023)

Knitting has an expressive presence in fashion, especially in clothing. King Henry VIII (1457-1509) diffused knitting when he received a pair of socks from a Spanish monarch (Bertoluci, 2018). Knitting craftsmanship became more and more present and, even with the invention of the knitting machine by the Reverend William Lee in 1589 in England, it did not cause hand knitting to fall into disuse.

In social contexts, knitting was also present. During the period of the First and Second World Wars, hand knitting appears on the request for help throughout the United States, yesterday women and children are summoned to weave socks for the soldiers in a gesture of solidarity, as shown in Figure 5. At that time, the raw material for making was scarce and in many situations, the solution was to dismantle pieces ready for the manufacture of new artifacts (Braun, 2013).

Figure 5 - Knitting in War



Source: Fashion For Future¹⁰ (2021).

¹⁰ Available at: <https://www.fashion-for-future.com/post/historia-trico> Accessed on: 25 nov. 2023.



During the wars, hand-knitted garments were also used to hide messages from spies. Until then, an item of royal clothing, it becomes an item of patriotic act. At different times in history, manual knitting is present and what favors its contemporary permanence is human contact with the technique (Hoffert, 2021).

Elizabeth Zimmerman (1910 – 1999), a prominent designer in the field of handmade knitting, known as EZ, is admired by knitters from all over the world, thus being a reference in the sector.

The proposal of manual knitting referring to the legacy of EZ transforms complex themes and techniques into a practical management through its adaptations. EZ was a book author and founded the publishing house *School House Press*, which is currently run by her daughter Meg Swanson. However, it is fascinating to see how the work developed by E.Z, with his memory preserved by family members, still directs and inspires designers who are interested in the technique of hand knitting. For Marsh (2016, p¹¹. 3) "Elizabeth Zimmermann is a uniquely advantageous teacher to make this analysis".

Manual knitting has an appreciable history and expresses a very significant representation in fashion due to the fact that anyone in any chronological age and gender can develop the skill of weaving. This makes it possible for the individual to get in touch with the fashion elaborated by himself and for others. Whether as a leisure activity or a professional segment in fulfilling orders for parts, selling by prompt delivery or developing projects that are also popularly known as recipes and teaching classes. In this sense, manual knitting is presented in the current fashion area.

HAND KNITTING IN CONTEMPORARY FASHION

In the context of everyday social life, knitting has been understood as a *hobby* of the feminine universe and that, in contemporary reality, is present in art and fashion and has expressed interest in the male universe, as presented by designer Stephen West in this study.

Manual knitting in fashion is reflected in the *slow fashion* movement. This movement seeks to value traditional techniques, which emphasize decelerated consumption and opposes *fast fashion*, which drives exaggerated consumption in quantities and varieties of products. Thus, modern concepts such as the *Maker Movement* and the so-called *Do It Yourself begin to emerge*, which in translation to Portuguese is do it yourself (Hocaoglu; Akblutu; Er, 2013).

Many books and magazines with didactic texts and illustrations were the main means of dissemination of this handicraft in which they are always sold in physical and virtual bookstores, in the few newsstands and newspapers, which are practically extinct. Thus, people with vast diversified

¹¹ Source language version: "Elizabeth Zimmerman is an especially advantageous individual lens through which to make this examination" (Marsh, 2016, p. 3).



knowledge in the artisanal technique of knitting, in some cases, exchange information in a virtual environment as proposed by *Maker Moviment*.

The culture of the *Maker* movement explores the sharing of information between the creators and the holders of the information, i.e., those who hold possession of the information. It is inserted in the field of *Maker culture*, the sharing of knowledge takes place through online tutorials and meetings in creative spaces where curious or interested people are attracted who identify opportunities and possibilities in these environments (Aires, 2015).

Manual knitting in contemporary society has been disseminated on social networks and video platforms, such as *Youtube*, for example, because the audience reach is greater in physical stores that sell handicraft products in which instructors who teach classes of the techniques are present. However, in Brazil, manual knitting has low adhesion and is still little publicized. However, it is in the southern region of the country that this technique is practiced with greater enthusiasm, which is understood as its greater occupation in the period of colonization, with a significant presence of European immigrants (Martins, 2015).

Manual knitting in clothing brands usually puts one piece or another to compose a *look* and this is marketed as an exclusive piece. In this study, we present two Brazilian brands that work with hand knitting: DoiSÉlles and Señorita Galante.

DOISÉLLES

The founder of the DoiSÉlles brand, Raquell Guimarães, originally from Minas Gerais, has developed a business model that offers manual knitting in the luxury market that values and values innovation and products with impeccable quality and finishes. The name of the brand is due to the fact that the designer always needs to warn people that the end of her name is written with two L's. This made his positioning in the market and his work style unique and inspiring (Salum; Coleta, 2018).

At the beginning of working with the brand, the founder went through difficulties in finding qualified labor, because the general public related to manual knitting as a *hobby* and not as a professional possibility. Raquell passed in front of the Carandiru prison in the city of São Paulo and the image of the inmates, seen by her passing, remained in her memory. Some time later, in 2009, she started the Lotus Flower project. This project was carried out in the city of Juiz de Fora - MG in a maximum security penitentiary and later in the public complex of Ribeirão das Neves - MG (Salum; Coleta, 2018).

The inmates who work with the designer already had a history of good behavior and are being evaluated by a psychologist and a social worker. The knitting pieces developed by the DoiSÉlles



brand cater to the female audience with a timeless concept and a voluminous mesh with various textures.

MISS GALLANT

The brand was founded by sisters Anne and Ana Galante in 2008. Textile craftsmanship has been with the designer Anne since her graduation from Senac in the city of São Paulo, where she always executed a piece commissioned by a colleague. Her sister and partner, Ana Galante, graduated in Fashion and Textiles from USP in the city of São Paulo, is involved in the administrative and marketing aspects of the brand.

The company *Señorita Galante* began its functions as a *private label* in which it always served other brands for the manufacture of fashion and decoration projects. Everything has always been made by hand and the artisans who are part of the team work on the brand in different modalities such as in the workplace itself or on a daily basis and make the pieces at their home (Galante, 2023).

With the structuring of the brand in a solid business model, the private label scheme was removed and its product catalogs were elaborated and entrepreneurship was an encouraged path for the brand, because, in addition to being difficult to find artisans with specific labor and who are interested in working with handicrafts, there is still a statistic that threatens the entrepreneur as reported by Galante (2023) "one in five companies close in the first year and about 50% of them do not last five years, according to data from the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) (Galante, 2023, p. 57).

Anne Galante begins to develop as an instructor of knitting and crochet workshops in 2015 when she gives a lecture at the Brazilian Knitting Congress that took place in the city of Curitiba-PR. The workshops she teaches take place at Sesc units in the city of São Paulo. The brand, in addition to the proposal of handicrafts, continues to encourage and stimulate the consumer's sympathy for the knitting technique until the present moment.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The analysis of the theories addressed in this article shows that the sources presented in handicrafts dialogue with each other in a linear way, that is, the three references that define the concept of handicrafts as the Conceptual Base of Brazilian Handicrafts, Unesco and SEBRAE emphasize that manual skill is determinant for the practical processes of handicrafts. as in the case of knitting, which is the object of study of this research.

Regarding the distinction between handicrafts and art, Sennet (2009) states that the difference is that art presents a creative freedom in its execution due to a more immediate knowledge that is not followed by techniques and that the way of doing things is often recreated. Craftsmanship is a tacit



knowledge, derived from practice and that can modify and create a technique based on reflection and wisdom. Both in handicrafts and in art, creativity is very evident and assumes a function that enhances the creation of the artifact.

Ostrower (2010) proposes to understand that creation arises from solutions to a problem interconnected to the imaginary. However, the act of creating originates from a reconfiguration of the world, through existing forms or new forms that acquire other meanings before the creator or society, which progresses and creates new concepts and values.

Craftsmanship related to creativity presents an important concept so that artisanal making becomes enchanting and techniques come to perpetuate themselves, as Galante (2023) reports: "The creative part is important, the artisanal has a different flow, a different time, but that does not mean that it is less professional [...]" (Galante, 2023, p. 61).

Following Galante's (2023) reasoning, it is understood that artisanal work is not easily replicated on a large scale and the final product becomes valued when inserted in this context.

The theories of manual knitting are challenging when reading and analyzing for writing, because they need a complement and this points out that it is necessary to seek further studies for manual knitting technique in Brazil. Technical and theoretical studies are few and the presence of this manuality both in the history of fashion and in contemporary time is important because it is a matter of material records and affective and creative memories.

Finally, manual knitting and handicrafts need more intense studies and point to fashion as an area of knowledge that is intrinsically linked to creativity. The studies consulted and cited in this study present theoretical data with few current productions and with the need to be reviewed and studied in a more consistent and in-depth way.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Handicrafts are presented as a theme to be deepened in terms of fashion and economics. Handicrafts, nowadays, move and impact both the economy and the textile industry that manufactures and imports yarn as raw material.

Creativity is a concept that values this theme and can imprint the artisan's identity on the product. This research provided an understanding of the possible relationships between artists, designers and artisans.

The function of the artist's work in this context is essentially ornamental and contemplative. On the other hand, the designer's creation is primarily ergonomic and practical. Both artist and designer can be recognized as authorial creators. The craftsman, however, dedicates himself to the reproduction of already existing works, employing his manual skills for this purpose. However, the

artisan has the potential to evolve into an artist or designer, depending on the type of object he or she conceives and develops, as illustrated in Figure 6.

Figure 6 - Possible relationships between artists, designers and artisans



Source: DALL·E 2024-04-11 20.33.00. Curatorship: Authors

Knowing manual knitting and the concepts of handicrafts invites and instigates more developments about the origin and its presence in the evolutionary history of humanity. Manual knitting is not just a leisure or therapeutic activity.

There are few publications in Brazilian studies that deal with the theme of this research in which the information is not based on structured sources.

Finally, handicrafts and hand knitting stand out as two terms that instigate discoveries to be made in the artistic, sociological and economic context. The act of knitting manifests an intimate approach to fashion in the sense that it allows you to open horizons to foster the development of creativity.

By going through different periods of history, hand knitting demonstrates its persistence and relevance. This artisanal process continues to exist and resist, evoking a work of cultural practices that spans generations.



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