

## **Sustainable Innovation 2019**

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**University for the Creative Arts**

**Business School**

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### **2030: Mass Customization Will be the Only Viable Business Model in the Fashion Industry.**

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Mass customization will be the only viable business model in the fashion industry by 2030, completely transitioning away from mass production. Utilizing software, micro factories and direct design measures customization will overtake all levels of the fashion industry. The transition has begun in major fashion houses engaged in efforts of experimentation and testing the viability of the sustainable business model of mass customization. Currently the technology exists at an economically accessible level to shift the fashion industry business model from mass production of standard sized clothing to the mass customization of garments specific to each consumer. By utilizing CAD software and digital fabrication techniques the transition can delete large amounts of unnecessary waste created by the fashion industry. The average consumer throws away an average of 70 pounds of garment waste per year, often wearing a garment less than five times. Software tools aiding the business model of mass customization bring solutions of the fashion industry to global and local levels, creating value and altering the environmental impact of the fashion industry significantly.

Customizing garments via software through design and size personalization, construction methodology for specific wear case and end of garment life, can inject value into fashion. This added value can eliminate the decades long disposable garment era and continue the elimination of several environmental issues the industry faces today. These garment toolkits give the same computational power to SMEs as giant fashion houses have, which will democratize the industry's players. In shifting the business model to customization, the industry can alter its definition of scale from one that is based on volume production to one based on valued production. Valued production will have effects throughout the supply chain towards a healthier fashion industry. Trends are similar within hardware, as cutting tables and laser cutters are no longer considered specialty machinery. This allows local designers and SMEs to set up their own micro factories to further mass customization on a local level. This technological shift in business models favors SMEs, giving them a new advantage and new accessible tools within the market. However, large enterprises can also benefit from adding customization and micro factory strategies within their sustainability plan. Large fashion enterprises also have the opportunity through CAD software toolkits to target direct trend pieces to specific environments and set up micro factories to enable locally custom made trend pieces. The promise with this approach is that it would extend garment life whether from a SME or larger enterprise ensuring the consumer receives value.

Transitioning the fashion industry to mass customization will inject personalized value into garments and create a cycle of garment knowledge and appreciation, which will produce longer garment life, aid in the global sustainable development goals and have positive environmental results.