



**THE STRZEMIŃSKI ACADEMY OF FINE ARTS
ŁÓDŹ**

FACULTY OF DESIGN
INSTITUTE OF FASHION

Adrianna Grudzińska-Pham

PhD THESIS

**It is allowed to touch – the function of touch in aesthetic cognition
and its influence on the scope of technological and design
activities in the context of authorial fashion collection**

Supervisor

Dr hab. Sylwia Romecka-Dymek, prof. ASP

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Introduction

The power of touch has a literal and metaphorical meaning. On the one hand, it is a source of concrete and reliable information about one's existence and location in space; and it allows to create small things and great works. On the other hand, it can impress our personality and emotionalism in a material or another person's mind, and vice versa.

Creases, worn-out and discoloured spots on one's clothes, or sagging chairs, retain one's shapes and unique histories, habits, or characteristic features. The touch can be literally a loving caress, or metaphorically a strong blow; the boundaries of the notion are blurred. Though one rarely consciously ponders on it, the touch is present all the time, from birth till death.

The title *It is allowed touch* refers to a warning sign "Do not touch" placed at all kinds of exhibitions and forbidding physical contact with the exhibits. Culturally, the touch is associated with something evil, prohibited, impure, and potentially threat-related. It is pushed into a dark zone, and the chances of applying its cognitive potential to expand the knowledge about the world are slim.

The aim of this work is to find out what haptic activities could influence the aesthetic perception of fashion, and to create a collection that would stimulate, directly or indirectly, the sense of touch.

Chapter I

What is touch?

The answer to this question has been sought already by Aristotle. In his treatise “On the soul” he stated that “the primary form of sense is touch”,¹ as it is characteristic of all animals, even those with no hearing or vision abilities. According to the Stagirite, touch is connected with greed for pleasant things, as it allows to differentiate pleasant objects from those that bring negative sensations;² and it is connected with taste that protects against harmful food. Moreover, touch is the only sense in which human beings are superior to other animals due to intellectual and interpretative abilities of man.³ Another important observation is a dualistic character of touch which always involves two parties – the touching and the touched.⁴ The ancient philosopher also wondered whether touch is one sense, or a group of cooperating senses, and which organ of our body receives such sensations.⁵ However, in spite of the fact that Aristotle emphasizes the uniqueness of tactile (caused by external stimuli) and haptic (coming from ourselves) sensations⁶ due to practical and biologically motivated character of the sense of touch, he acknowledges the superiority of visual perception as, in his opinion, it is processed by human mind before other senses. In the European thought the Aristotle’s typology of “sensual soul” has established the position of touch as the sense of the second category for ages.⁷ Starting from Middle Ages this stand was justified with religious motivations, thus connecting touch with covetous approach as opposed to contemplative one.⁸ As late as in the 17th century, for philosophers and humanists a subject was identical with “pure thought”, and corporality was not a vital feature that would have any cognitive character.⁹ In 1769 the underestimated tactile sensations were reminded by German philosopher and pastor Johann Gottfried Herder, who called attention to

1 Arystoteles, *O duszy*, Edycja Komputerowa: www.zrodla.historyczne.prv.pl, 2003 r., p. 34 (access 13/01/2020)

2 Ibidem, p.37

3 Ibidem, p.57

4 Ibidem, p.64

5 Ibidem, p.62

6 M. Grunwald, *Homo Hapticus. Dlaczego nie możemy żyć bez dotyku*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, Kraków 2019, p. 24

7 E. Struzik, *Fenomen dotyku w tradycji filozofii i współczesnej refleksji humanistycznej* [in:] *W przestrzeni dotyku*, MDK Batory w Chorzowie, Chorzów 2009, p. 72

8 W. Tatarkiewicz, *Dzieje sześciu pojęć*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 2012, p. 377

9 J. Kurek, Krzysztof Maliszewski, *W przestrzeni dotyku*, MDK Batory w Chorzowie, Chorzów 2009, p. 11

a practically absolute absence of the sense of touch in the process of education and its untapped potential as a cognitive method.¹⁰

An interest in the sense of touch, and consequently, an interest in resulting perceptive possibilities and influence on human life, arose at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, when a significant progress in technological, medical and biological sciences took place, and research on laws governing human behaviour and interactions developed. Then scientists started analysing touch as a multifaceted issue, with respect to its interdisciplinary and exceptional character.

1.1. The first of senses

Touch is the first sense that develops in foetal life. Before their eyes and ears form, fetuses are examining the surrounding world in their mother's wombs with the palms of their hands. At fourteen weeks the whole skin, i.e., the largest human organ, becomes sensitive to touch.¹¹ Our sensory system is made of receptors located all over the whole skin – their greatest amount is placed on finger tips, tip of nose, lips and tongue¹², and that is why we feel delicate brushes, grasps and pressures, warmth and coldness. Alongside organs of surface sensation, we are also equipped with organs of deep sensation, located among others in muscles and tendons. They inform us about hardness or elasticity of objects, their movement, weight, distance, as well as about gravitation taking its effect on human body. Without information supplied by receptors we would not be able to perform basic activities like standing, sitting, or walking.¹³ Thus, the most fundamental function of the sense of touch is to protect individuals against danger and harmful factors, and to give them information about the external world and themselves. The essence of touch, however, is not limited to its physical aspect, it just starts with it. Numerous psychological and neurological research projects have proved that the sense of touch is directly

10 T. Sławek, *Cienie i rzeczy. Rozważania o dotyku* [in:] *W przestrzeni dotyku*, MDK Batory w Chorzowie, Chorzów 2009, p.15

11 T. Olszak, Agnieszka Sowa, *Zbawienny wpływ dotyku* [in:] *Ja My Oni „Czego potrzeba człowiekowi do życia”* (100127); <https://www.polityka.pl/jamyoni/1736308,1,zbawienny-wplyw-dotyku.read> (access: 15/01/2020)

12 B. Kopczyńska, *Dotyk jako forma komunikacji z chorym – doświadczenie lekarza hospicjum*, [in:] *W przestrzeni dotyku*, MDK Batory w Chorzowie, Chorzów 2009, p.171

13 M. Grunwald, op.cit., p. 74

connected with our communication skills, or even with mental and physical health of man and other mammals.

1.2. Experiments with tactile sensations

One of the most famous experiments on the sense of touch was made by American psychologist Harry Harlow in the mid-20th century. He ran a very cruel, as compared with modern research ethical standards, experiment, in which he tested psychological need for closeness and love, and its influence on physical and mental condition. Harlow isolated young rhesus monkeys from their biological mothers and substituted them with two surrogate “mothers” – one made from cold metal wire, and the other from terry cloth. Though it was only the wire “mother” that held a bottle with food, monkeys approached her just for a short moment to feed, and spent most time with the soft “mother”, nestling against her and looking for comfort and consolation at hard times. The need for cuddling and the touch of their “mother” was stronger than hunger; it was more important than satisfaction of their basic physiological needs.¹⁴ Similar experiments were made in the 20th century on rodents, which were dying when they were deprived of physical contact with their mothers.¹⁵ Those animals that survived were subjected to the touch of their carers, who stroked and massaged their bodies, just like carers of orphans at children’s homes or persons nursing premature babies at hospitals do. Research shows that regular massages reduce the level of stress hormone and allow to catch up on developmental deficits, which is particularly true for infants, as well as for other persons, which shall be discussed further on.¹⁶

1.3. The influence of touch on mental and physical development of human being

Experiments on orphans were started as early as in the Middle Ages, but concrete answers and observations did not appear until the 20th century. Only then it became clear that it is not enough to give children food, living space and professional medical

¹⁴ *Magiczna moc dotyku* [in:] *Charaktery* 8/2006, <https://charaktery.eu/artykul/1331>, (access: 10/01/2020)

¹⁵ J. Retzbach, *Jednym dotknięciem* [in:] *Charaktery, Zdrowie i choroby. Psychologia dziś* 2/2016, 28/06/2016, <https://charaktery.eu/artykul/jednym-dotknieciem>, (access: 10/01/2020)

¹⁶ M. Grunwald, op. cit., pp. 51 – 52

care. Research proves that infants (just like young animals) exposed to permanent sensory deprivation shall not survive, or shall struggle with emotional, social, motor, or even intellectual impairments. In the 1940s child psychologist Rene Spitz described inorganic retardation syndrome, i.e. the so-called orphan disease, affecting orphaned children lacking closeness and attention.¹⁷ In the last century mortality of the youngest residents of children homes has radically fallen, among others because of the fact that apart from feeding, washing or changing, carers and nurses are also stroking, massaging and giving cuddles to infants, which helps them survive and develop social competences,¹⁸ yet it does not guarantee that that rationed volume of touch they experience is enough for them to keep full mental health.

The touch is of no less importance for emotional balance of adults. Tiffany Field from the University Medical Centre in Miami has found out that persons who have not experienced enough closeness in their childhood shall struggle with consequences of that scarcity in their adult life, e.g. they shall have negative attitude to their corporeality.¹⁹ According to Martin Grunwald, a psychologist, a founder and head of haptic research laboratory at the University of Leipzig, abnormally developed receptors or impaired neurons that receive signals from them send false information about the body to the brain and distort the image of the body, which results in mental disorders like anorexia or bulimia, lack of acceptance or even aversion to own corporeality.²⁰

The sense of touch gives us information not only about the external world, but also about ourselves: our weight and dimensions of our body, its proportions and physical relation with the surrounding reality. If it is not developed normally, it may be subjected to one of numerous tactile therapies. One of the most obvious is deep tissue massage, which relaxes, reduces stress, increases the level of serotonin and decreases the level of cortisol,²¹ and activates skin receptors, including deep ones. Such a therapy is effective in depression, anxiety disorders, insomnia, anorexia and

17 *Magiczna moc dotyku*, op. cit., (access: 10/01/2020)

18 M. Grunwald, op. cit., p. 47

19 K. Tucholska, *Przytul, obejmij, pocałuj* [in:] *Charaktery* 11/2018, 28/11/2018, <https://charaktery.eu/artykul/przytul-obejmij-pocaluj>, (access: 10/01/2020)

20 J. Retzbach, op. cit., (access: 10/01/2020)

21 K. Tucholska, op. cit., (access: 10/01/2020)

bulimia, as well as in diseases with no mental origin, like mucoviscidosis, diabetes, or chronic pain.²²

Another concept of treatment of eating disorders is being developed by Martin Grunwald. The idea is to exert light pressure on skin and receptors located in it by a neoprene suit, custom-made for each individual patient. Delicate and constant pressure exerted on the whole body makes patients “feel” themselves, and their brains obtain true data on the dimensions of their bodies. Due to the tight-fitting suit patients get a realistic image of their bodies.²³ Movements made in the suit allow to produce more stimuli for the brain, which can work out an objective map of the body and its borders.²⁴ Such a permanent pressure on the body that helps to feel it properly is also useful in sports, which shall be discussed further on.

As it is generally known, senses are dulled with age, and touch is no exception from the rule. As we grow older, our response to stimuli is weaker, receptors become less precise than in our youth, and they need a sort of rehabilitation and some effort to keep them acute. The research conducted by Martin Grunwald’s team proves that, due to manual character of their everyday work, physiotherapists, massage therapists and osteopaths retain the sharpness of the sense of feeling of their receptors much longer than other professionals.²⁵ Research has also shown that dance and movement improve motor skills and receptors’ sensitivity by stimulation. To keep the mind in good condition one should consciously motivate it, that is touch and move a lot.²⁶

Chapter II

Sensory deprivation

As I have mentioned before, children and young animals deprived of touch and closeness die, or struggle with serious mental deficits for a lifetime. The discovery of

22 K. Tucholska, op. cit., (access: 10/01/2020)

23 J. Retzbach, op. cit., (access: 10/01/2020)

24 M. Grunwald, op. cit., p. 153

25 Ibidem, p. 101

26 Joachim Retzbach, op. cit., (access: 10/01/2020)

interdependence between the lack of touch and developmental problems was a milestone in studies on human behaviour and an inspiration for numerous, often inhumane, experiments. In the 1950s, to the order of special services of Canada, the United States and the United Kingdom, psychologist Donald Hebb with a group of researchers launched a programme called “Artichoke”. The aim was to develop a system that would fully control the mind of another person.²⁷ Earlier investigations have shown that elimination of sight and hearing does not give satisfactory results, that is why this time the idea was to deprive participants of the experiment (students, in case of “Artichoke” project) of any contact with the external world and expose them to the activity of their own brains. The students were isolated from the world by means of special “clothes” that veiled their eyes, and tightly fitted their heads eliminating sounds; and, most importantly, the clothes blocked touching anything (including their own bodies) by huge cylindrical carton cuffs that effectively limited hand movements. The participants spent time in a horizontal position, making breaks for eating and toilet. The remuneration for the participation in the project depended on the number of days, therefore they were trying to stay as long as possible, which contrary to their initial expectations turned out to be difficult, or even dangerous, as the longer they were subjected to sensory deprivation, the more disorders of consciousness they suffered. They experienced hallucinations and lost the ability of logical thinking and orienting themselves in the real world, and their actions resembled the behaviour of schizophrenics. Deprived of external stimulation, their brains started creating images due to random activity of neurons. They had visions of colourful patches, unreal creatures, imaginary animals walking around, or an unpleasant feeling of swelling. The results of the experiment for mental health of its participants were so negative and lasting that the project was discontinued.²⁸

The failure of project “Artichoke” has not discouraged other researchers from next attempts at sensory deprivation. In 1954, i.e., just a couple of years after Donald Hebb’s experiment, psychiatrist John C. Lilly from the National Institute of Mental Health in the United States launched a similar trial. This time, he placed the subjects in special tanks filled with the solution of magnesium sulphate, at the temperature

27 A. Piotrowska, *Deprywacja sensoryczna. Co się dzieje z mózgiem odcięty od dopływu bodźców?* [in:] *Focus.pl*, 10/06/2019, (access: 14/01/2020)

28 E. Kasten, *Wyrwani z rzeczywistości* [in:] *Mózg i Umysł, Charaktery* 12/2011, 1/12/2011, <https://charaktery.eu/artykul/wyrwani-z-rzeczywistosci>, (access: 10/01/2020)

possibly closest to the temperature of human body. Lilly was more successful than his predecessor in elimination of the sense of touch, as a floating body had no sense of gravitation, which made the participants of the experiment lose their self-consciousness and sense of time and space. Just like students from project “Artichoke”, they also started hallucinating.²⁹

The last investigations of sensory deprivation conducted as an experiment on humans were made in 1970s, when Dr. Peter Suedfeld and Dr. Roderick Borrie from the University of British Columbia wanted to look for positive results of isolating human consciousness from external stimuli. Their research has shown that an hour spent in a deprivation tank has a positive influence on psyche and may be used for the treatment of mental disorders, like anxiety states or depression, or orthopaedic problems, or simply for pure relax. The system, initially conceptualized by Lilly, was called REST; and it is now available in many spa centres, where all persons who need to “reset”, or are overwhelmed with a flood of impulses coming to them, may experience cutting off from reality.³⁰ Floatation tanks filled with warm water with EPSOM salt have become very popular. They reduce most external stimuli, as they block sounds and allow to relax in complete darkness, and also eliminate the sense of gravitation when the body is floating in the saturated solution of salt.³¹

The demand for floatation centres is growing and new centres are being opened. Nowadays, inhabitants of overcrowded urbanized areas, who have to cope with information overflow, are looking for the ways of cutting off and trying to escape from overstimulation with bad news brought by media from all over the world.³² Besides advantages, Marshall McLuhan’s global village has also its dark side: stress and fear of the oppressive huge world around. One of social responses to the situation is a trend called *cocooning*, growing in the last decade. The concept involves staying inside one’s home and creating one’s own autonomous world, to be left only when it is absolutely necessary. Homeworking, Netflix, couriers delivering supplies are already an obvious part of that home reality, oriented inwards and strengthening the need for tactile sensations. These may be drawn from carefully chosen elements of

29 A. Piotrowska, op. cit., (access: 14/01/2020)

30 Ibidem

31 Float SPA, <http://floatspa.pl/index.html> (access: 19/05/2020)

32 Focusing Future, <http://www.focusingfuture.com/me-consumer/cocooning-is-happening-isnt-it/> (access: 19/05/2020)

the surroundings, like comfortable furniture, soft textiles, care accessories, “home spa”, and clothes. The clothes should correspond to the above mentioned cocoon, that is they should protect and bundle the body up in delicate, natural fabrics made from plant fibres, loose-fitting and giving freedom of movements, with minimum disturbing details.³³

Chapter III

Magical power of touch

At the other end of the scale of social needs connected with contact and stimulation by external stimuli there is a group experiencing “hunger for closeness”, which, according to Kory Floyd from the University of Arizona, has become a growing psychological problem of modern world.³⁴ The hunger is felt mainly by the elderly, orphaned, or sick persons, and those who are rejected by the society because of their atypical looks, that is all the lonely, no matter whether they are living in an anonymous crowd, or with a family that gives no tenderness or attention. All of them are exposed to depression, anxiety states, and disappointment with their lives.

Conclusions drawn from a contact with people suffering from “hunger for closeness” are presented by Barbara Kopczyńska, MD, PhD, who has accompanied patients in hospices. Fear of being rejected, shame and an overwhelming feeling of loneliness may be overcome by tender stroking or holding hands. Hugging soothes and shows care and physical presence of another person; it also allows to feel somebody’s breath and follow its rhythmical pace, which gives some comfort in a panic attack.³⁵

Touch is the first sense that develops as early as in the foetal phase of life, and it stays with us, like hearing, till the very end. Soon after birth a newborn is placed on the mother’s abdomen to form ties with her and feel direct stimulation.³⁶ Touch welcomes a newborn child to the world and is a final farewell to a dying individual; it

33 WGSN, https://www.wgsn.com/content/board_viewer/86626/page/5, (access: 19/05/2020)

34 *Jesteśmy głodni bliskości* [in:] *Charaktery* 16/10/2016, <https://charaktery.eu/artukul/jestesmy-glodni-bliskosci>, (access: 19/05/2020)

35 B. Kopczyńska, *Dotyk jako forma komunikacji z chorym – doświadczenie lekarza hospicjum*, [in:] *W przestrzeni dotyku*, MDK Batory w Chorzowie, Chorzów 2009, p.175

36 M. Grunwald op. cit., p. 43

is as important as it was at the beginning of human life: it gives the sense of security and is a non-verbal means of communication with the external world.³⁷

In the past, when science could not yet explain the mechanism of the sense of touch (and also today, though we know much more about it), many people believed in its magical power. A brush of monarch's hand could heal, and a touch of folk healer's hand could lift a spell. At the end of the 19th century, in an orphanage in Germany, when medical staff was unable to cure a young patient, an elderly woman, whose help had already been proven before, was called and she carried the child in her arms; and her touch in a miraculous, "magical" way made the child healthy again.³⁸ Even the best medical care cannot substitute real contact with another human being. As I have mentioned before, children deprived of carer's touch and closeness do not develop properly, and even sometimes their chances to survive are smaller. For adults the touch is almost equally important, as it determines their mental and physical condition to a large extent. Physical contact with another person gives great pleasure and relief to those who experience that sort of deprivation, and contributes to their shorter recovery.

3.1. The need for closeness

The modern reply to the need for tenderness and care can be found, among others, in spa centres (already mentioned above) that offer a variety of massages. From face massage, through the massage of the whole body to warm stones massages, they all relax, additionally giving the feeling of acceptance and care. Though visits to spa centres have become very common, not everyone can afford frequent treatments for financial or organizational reasons. Then there is an option of home spa, like stone face rollers, stimulating mats or massage guns.

In my view, whisperers, folk healers from Podlasie region, who think that God has endowed them with a special ability of curing illnesses, can be classified as a Polish phenomenon deriving from magic properties of touch. They usually heal problems connected with "nerves", stress, and "draughts", i.e., untypical cases of colds –

37 B. Kopczyńska, op. cit. p.177

38 *Magiczna moc dotyku*, op. cit., (access: 10/01/2020)

generally, with afflictions of unclear origin, often of mental background, arising from exhaustion, life tensions, or old age. People who come to them for help are usually believers, who look for real closeness and interest that they miss in their everyday lives. Whisperers whisper Orthodox prayers from the Polish-Belarusian border, tenderly touching ill places on their “patients” bodies, thus showing them full acceptance of all their deficiencies. They give them their time and attention, and their “patients”, typically lonely elder persons, members of small country communities attached to local tradition, feel they are important to someone. Prayers said hastily and rhythmically, the sound and smell of a lighted match, cracking sound of burning linen fibres and light touches of whisperer’s hand calm down the mind, help to cut off from the excess of external stimuli and allow to concentrate on the present and the relation built by the ritual. Sometimes, city dwellers also come to folk healers, as in big cities there is no chance for a close contact with strangers, and loneliness makes them seek closeness in another way.

3.2. Online touch

While watching videos showing whisperers’ rituals, one may feel carried away by hypnotising atmosphere of Podlasie region and the intimacy of relations between presented persons, despite the distance in time and place. A modern and democratic solution corresponding to whisperers’ magic is ASMR – *Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response*, *meridians* meaning *sensory lines* in this context. In practice, it is slight tingling, a subtle shiver similar to a very delicate electric current going from the top of one’s head, through the neck down the back.³⁹ That nice feeling comes with external aural and visual stimuli, which are so suggestive that can stimulate also the sense of touch. In an online version the sense is provoked by youtubers and ASMR artists, who prepare recordings (occasionally, a creative process is also shown) with various sounds, like the sounds of head massage, hair combing, finger knocking, rustle of paper, following of a shape or material with a finger, brush strokes, writing, whispering, counting, enumerating things, as well as the sounds of vacuuming, cutting, or even slurping. All authors are trying to work out their own styles, tones, and tricks that would calm their listeners, bring them the tingling and facilitate falling

³⁹ Cambridge Dictionary, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/asmr>, (access: 17/05/2020)

asleep. Now and then, “lullers” tell stories or do the “role playing”, acting situations from real life with connotations of relax, contact, concentration of another person on the story teller, like a visit to a spa centre, massage, medical examination, make-up making, or a visit to a hairdresser.

Though their activities are solely virtual, the effects are similar to those brought about by whisperers, who also concentrate on the suffering people, the only difference being that there is nobody present in reality. It is an answer to the needs of persons living alone in urban isolation, hungry for closeness and attention. *Personal attention*, a phrase appearing in titles of many YouTube releases suggests an intimate contact between Internet users and ASMR artists. Just like in case of whisperers, the sound of one activity, or a selected object, allows to concentrate on one concrete sound, cut off other stimuli, and live here and now.

The ASMR phenomenon is of a very subjective character, and depends on individual sensitivity of senses. For that reason it has not been scientifically verified yet; it is rather a humanistic than scientific notion. However, psychologists are of positive opinion about it, seeing it as “brain massage”, “stroking one’s ears”, a certain psychological trick which may help in psychotherapy.⁴⁰ ASMR allows to combine sensory experiences – most often we only listen, sometimes we watch, but the two senses are tempting the sense of touch and its receptors are so stimulated that we experience a haptic sensation. Our haptic imagination starts working.

Chapter IV

Haptic imagination

Haptic imagination may be reached in many ways, and some of them do not engage the sense of touch directly. To stimulate it one needs an image, a sound or a word that refers to one’s experience, associations, memories, or dreams. In other words, one’s mind may be “touched” by a word, a sound, or an

40 B. Grygiel, *ASMR: Do czego służy? Młaskanie, ciąkanie, drapanie szkła to masaż mózgu czy bzdura?* [in:] *Focus.pl*, 2/07/2019, <https://www.focus.pl/arttykul/masaz-mozgu-czy-bzdura-do-czego-sluzy-asmr>, (access: 16/05/2020)

image. Though it is only a metaphor, one shall have a very strong temptation to feel the surface of an object, or shall recollect the sensation experienced once. The question is: can tempting the sense of touch, without any physical contact, be regarded as haptic activity?

An interest in touch has appeared almost simultaneously in scientific and artistic circles. The discussion on the definition of the notion and conditions to be met by a work to be qualified as “haptic” started in the first half of the 20th century. Is it enough to imagine a sensation to experience an artistic work aesthetically in full?

Some researchers are of the opinion that in case of a haptic work, an aesthetic experience shall be “fully” possible solely through the sense of touch. One of them is Polish curator Aneta Rostkowska, who thinks that haptic imagination cannot substitute direct contact between the audience and a work of art.⁴¹ In practice, it means that in this case the cognition is made through the skin, of hands mainly, which move along the object, press or stroke it, and examine its physical features, temperature and texture. One acquires some knowledge about the object and may experience it to the full of their sense. The opinion of Aneta Rostkowska is disputed by Marta Smolińska, also a Polish curator, in her text *“(Nie) dotykaj! Haptyczne aspekty sztuki polskiej po 1945 roku” – uwagi kuratorki wystawy* (“Do not) touch! Haptic aspects of Polish art after 1945 – remarks of the curator of the exhibition”), who rightly observes that “you can sin in thought”.⁴² To stimulate the sense of touch, it is sufficient to “tempt” it, and a spectator may succumb to the “temptation”.⁴³ Haptic experiences are of a very subjective, almost intimate character, they depend on a type of personality. It is difficult to impose such a model of contact on spectators, therefore the level of their involvement in that contact may vary. Moreover, each object and each work stimulates spectators, as well as its author, in a different way. The touch always means the presence of two parties and their mutual contact, yet the contact may be physical or emotional one, remaining in a metaphorical and imagined sphere.⁴⁴ Marta Smolińska thinks that there is more than one hapticity, and

41 M. Smolińska, „(Nie) dotykaj! Haptyczne aspekty sztuki polskiej po 1945 roku” – uwagi kuratorki wystawy [in:] W kulturze dotyku? Dotyk i jego reprezentacje w tekstach kultury, NOMOS, Kraków 2016, p. 65

42 Ibidem p. 67

43 Ibidem, p. 67

44 Ibidem, p. 68

more than one type of haptic works, due to a unique approach of each spectator and special relation established with each work.⁴⁵ I agree with her opinion, as her approach allows a compromise: it is not only possible to include a wide range of sensations into the discussed category, but also accept the possibility of a close cooperation of senses in the course of aesthetic experience. Not all works can be “probed”, in some situations it is simply impossible, for example in poetry, or in film art. Also in most museums and art galleries it is not allowed to touch exhibits. Therefore, in such cases the sense of touch has to be reached indirectly, through sight or hearing. On the other hand, the physical contact with a work of art does not exclude the involvement of other senses. To my mind, it only changes the perspective of such cognition – from optical into haptic one. The reversed hierarchy enables conscious perception of critical and cognitive possibilities of the sense of touch, which in “vision-centric” reality is usually deprived of its attributes, reserved for high-ranking senses.

4.1. Examples of haptic works requiring direct touch to be fully experienced aesthetically

For many artists, especially performers, direct character of their contact with audience is simply fundamental for their artistic work. Marina Abramović puts human body on a pedestal, it is her main theme and medium connected with the touch as an inherent element of her artistic output. One of her most famous performances is *Rhythm 0* from 1974, when the artist prepared twenty-four objects, some of them of positive connotations, like flowers, feathers or small brushes, and some of them being actually instruments of torture, like knives, chains, or even a loaded gun. Participants of the performance could do with Marina’s body whatever they wanted using the prepared objects, without any fear of consequences. At first, no one was willing to start, the first attempts were timid and delicate; however, the more participants dared to overcome the barrier of inviolability of another person, the more surprising and sadistic⁴⁶ were their activities. The fact that the artist treated herself as an object and deprived her corporeality of an aspect of privacy, literally giving herself

45 M. Smolińska, op. cit., pp. 68-69

46 Il Sapere, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kijKz3JzoD4>, (access: 18/05/2020)

into the hands of members of the audience, has broken existing norms regulating direct contact. The aim was to test how far the participants of the performance would go, when their behaviour was absolutely unrestricted. Therefore the touch was an indispensable element of her artistic activity, and of an aesthetic experience of the audience. To my mind, it was the touch, understood as an activity and a manifestation of will, that was the essence of artistic activities of Abramović, who accepted all its forms, even aggressive ones.

One of the basic rules of almost all exhibitions is a strict ban on touching exhibits. An exception is a planned action, or an exhibition of artistic objects intended for interaction with the audience by their authors.

The body and the related touch are often a subject matter of the artistic work of Aleksandra Ska. My impression is that the works of the artist influence strongly haptic imagination, they provoke by their shape, texture, or an expressive quotation from reality. At the above mentioned exhibition “(Nie) dotykaj! Haptyczne aspekty sztuki polskiej po 1945 roku” („Do not) touch! Haptic aspects of Polish art after 1945”) curator Marta Smolińska placed a work “Obiekt w posiadaniu” (“Object in possession”) in a room, in which it was allowed to touch, or even cuddle, all exhibits. Tall, geometrical columns, looking stony from a distance, were actually made from foam that “remembered” an encountered shape for a while. If it had not been possible to examine their surface with fingers, perhaps members of the audience could have concluded from a description of the work that their eyes were deceived, and, contrary to appearances, the objects were nice and soft and perhaps it was possible to take them “in possession”, as the title suggests, that is to hold them in one’s arms. The key word is here “perhaps”, as the audience could not have experienced it through an adequate sense. According to Stanisław Ossowski, a theoretician of culture, aesthetic evaluation is made through individual experience and perception of a work of art and the process is of relative and democratic character.⁴⁷ If “Obiekt w posiadaniu” were to be made available exclusively through visual perception, the satisfaction with its originality would be solely intellectual, as the fact that the audience does not experience any astonishment, a sort of emotional

47 B. Dziemidok, *O wartościowaniu i przeżywaniu dzieła sztuki* [in:] *Główne kontrowersje estetyki współczesnej*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 2012, pp. 273 - 276

relief, makes the aesthetic experience incomplete. A positive surprise evoked in a close contact with Aleksandra Spa's work strengthens the aesthetic experience, as it is "partly disharmonious"⁴⁸: it starts with uncertainty, astonishment, or even disappointment, and then moves to pleasure and satisfaction with the contact with the object. I believe that members of the audience using only their haptic imagination activated by their sight to perceive "Obiekt w posiadaniu", do not experience it as intensely as those who can touch it.

Just like performance art and works of art, installation is a form of art penetrating and exploiting the existing space, therefore it is fundamental to experience it in a given place and at a given time; it needs contact with the audience to exist. Hrafnhildur Arnardóttir, called *Shoplifter*, is an artist of Icelandic origin, whose main medium of creation is hair, both real and artificial. Hair has a strong power of influence on haptic imagination. It is one of the most often used attributes in ASMR video recordings, as it is associated with relax, head massage, care and nice texture. However, the nature of the association may be different and repelling – hair of unknown origin, wet, or stuck in food fill with immediate disgust. Shoplifter is of the opinion that hair is connected with "fashion, expressing oneself and vanity," and it retains "a remnant of the wildness that we possess."⁴⁹ The artist dyes hair intense vivid colours and then makes gigantic "hairy" landscapes corresponding to Icelandic nature. *Nervescape* is a series of exhibitions, the arrangement and size of which depend on the place where they are created. Subsequent parts of the project appear in various spaces, therefore their form is each time different and novel. They are united by "loud"⁵⁰ colours taken from aurora borealis, which combined with ideas taken from the world of child imagination, allows to escape from a serious world of adults to positive images remembered from fairy tales and legends. Visitors to the exhibition are to be carried away by positive colours and start snuggling against warm and soft hairy constructions, appearing to reciprocate the touch and conveying the feeling of safety and happiness. Mere looking at *Nervescape*, its vibrant bright colours and tempting texture, and its impressing size, which make it look like a large-scale mascot, shall not substitute direct contact, if only a gentle stroke.

48 M. Wallis, *Wartości estetyczne łagodne i ostre* [in:] *Przeżycie i Wartość*, Wydawnictwo Literackie, Kraków 1968, pp. 185 - 205

49 KIASMA, Finish National Gallery, <https://kiasma.fi/en/exhibitions/shoplifter-nervescape/>, (access: 22/05/2020)

50 QAGOMA, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TRDonFgrh6w>, (access: 22/05/2020)

Shoplifter's concept is that her works reveal in full when the touch is used, and only then aesthetic experience becomes complete.

A form of art that cannot do without touch is haptic poetry, i.e., poems "written" by spatial activities. Objects stroked by hand and textures examined by tips of fingers invoke mechanic memory, which transfers one to remembered images or emotions. The aesthetic qualities of a work are not of prime importance here; what really counts is the choice of elements and associations they, or their arrangement, bring. As there is no concrete technique of operation, that form of art is democratic, it is a form of expression of both professional artists and amateurs. Usually, a poem resembles a diary, in which pages do not "carry" words but fragments of stuck objects. A more "smoothed" version of such poetry is created in the form of more professionally looking artistic books.

I have selected the discussed examples in a subjective way, based on an impression a given work has made on me and how deeply it has become embedded in my memory, and not on its popularity. The first that have come to my mind were works of art, which definitely require physical contact with the audience. However, hapticity in art may be understood in a less literal and more metaphoric way as a temptation and a wakening of the yearning for touch by other senses.

4.2. Examples of haptic works that may be experienced aesthetically through haptic imagination without physical involvement of the sense of touch

It is obvious that in visual arts it is the sight that is in the lead, and the sight imposes the role of observers on the audience. The aim of some artists is to involve the audience more emotionally and encourage its members to percept their works through their eyes but in strict interaction with the sense of touch. The different activation of sight does not eliminate it from perception, but extends the borders of the perception.

Reasons why art galleries usually do not let visitors touch the exhibits are obvious: the fear of damaging or dirtying them, or violating of the traditional border – the division into the subject and the object. Sometimes, however, the prohibition results

from the used material, which is too delicate, or from the field of art, from which a given work comes; in visual arts it is, for instance, a movie.

Regardless of whether authors cannot or do not want to allow their audience to directly touch their works, they can still create a haptic work that could appeal indirectly to the touch. The solution is to apply associations or suggestions that would be strong enough to move the imagination and turn the thoughts to a sensory course, which shall reduce the distance between the viewer and the viewed object, even if it is only an illusion.

The works of Magdalena Moskwa from 2013 are an example of works that I cannot touch but I would very much like to. They show fragments of human body, slices of pale flesh, cool in colour, with visible openings and wounds, arranged on a flat surface. Traditional painting techniques have been applied to create works locating on the border area of painting and sculpture. Relief forms with carefully painted blue veins and added streaks of hair are deceptively similar to human tissues. At first sight they are disgusting, as they resemble a corpse ready for post-mortem, or an already taken sample; however, with time, the anxiety or even disgust changes into fascination and will to carefully study the structures and textures of a given object. I look at their varied surfaces and I ponder over their haptic properties: does blunt and matt surface transform into smooth and slippery one? How deep is the opening? Is the edge of the “wound” smooth? Does stroking such a “physical painting” give any pleasure?

The touch plays also an important role in the process of creation. The workmanship of artists, their manual activities are important for the perception of their works. Firstly, the activities are an experience for artists, who work with a given material that puts up smaller or greater resistance, gives satisfaction or is unpleasant and presents a challenge. Secondly, artists work in a unique individual way and leave their “traces”, gestures, and hand prints that reflect their craftsmanship and technique; in a way, these are their signatures guaranteeing the uniqueness of their work. These marks help the viewers appreciate the author’s artistry and “feel” the creative process.

For the above described cycle of works Magdalena Moskwa has prepared a table where she has lined up instruments and elements with which she prepares her reliefs, like a pathologist in an autopsy room. The presentation of instruments and the whole creative process encourages viewers to visualize realization of similar objects by themselves: preparing chalk mortar, sculpting biological shapes in it, or searching for ideas for suggestive textures. The imagination has been moved under haptic influence; there is no direct touch, yet one tries to feel the quality and grip of observed objects, and even visualize the process of their creation (potentially by oneself).

Video art and multimedia art are connected with experimental and conceptual approach, unapparent and difficult to grasp, also in literal sense, which does not mean that the range of interest of the artist does not include subjects from a haptic current. Some years ago my attention was caught by multimedia installation of an artist of the young generation, Agnieszka Ewa Braun. The installation consists of two movies shown on “screens” made of strings hanging in a frame resembling a doorway. One video shows a young blonde girl combing her long hair, the other an elder woman doing the same with her grey hair. The work titled “Układ odniesienia” (“A frame of reference”) illustrates, in a simple but telling way, the aging of woman, a natural cycle of generational change, and eternal rituals, which on the one hand are everyday routine, but on the other have universal and timeless character.⁵¹ The image of soft and smooth hair builds intimacy and attracts hands which may play with the strings on which the videos are screened; however, the strings are not what we want to touch.

A video that also strongly stimulates my sense of touch, as it appeals to human physical experience and evokes haptic associations, is *Higiiena (Hygiene)* by Natalia Janus-Malewska.⁵² The author dressed in fur is carefully licking it like a cat. The clash of contexts is very strong here – a woman in stereotypical elegant real fur is licking it in a primal way like an animal. That private act of care reminds the observers what is fur and to what world it belongs, and that its presence on woman’s body is unnatural. Despite recreated instinctive movements, the contact of tongue

51 P. Komorowski, *W poszukiwaniu continuum – o twórczości Agnieszki Ewy Braun* [in:] *Format. Pismo artystyczne*, No. 73/2016

52 Zachęta Sztuki Współczesnej, <https://zachetaszczecin.com/Main/Artykul/natalia-janus-malewska> (access: 5/06/2020)

with fur also does not seem natural; when I watch it, I feel some dissonance, mental and physical discomfort, my mind and my body reject that form of touch, which is a fusion between human and animal attributes, and a fusion between the living and the dead.

Movie makers also willingly appeal to haptic imagination. Direct touch is out of the question in movies, therefore in order to activate that sense film directors have to stimulate viewers' associations and mechanical memory. I believe that a good example of a movie in which hapticity is an important aspect is "Body/Ciało" directed by Małgorzata Szumowska. The title itself is characteristic, as right from the very beginning steers one's thoughts towards corporeality. Main characters have lost a relative, they miss her substantial presence and warmth. There is coolness in their relations; an orphaned daughter does not accept her corporeality or her father, who distances from his problematic child mentally and physically. They turn away from each other, sinking in loneliness and hopelessness. A turning point comes, when

a medium appears in their life and tries to contact them with the dead mother through a special ritual of holding hands in a circle. Though the physical contact is initially forced, and the communication with the spirit is unsuccessful, finally a miracle happens: the relation between the sceptical father and his daughter, trying out various methods of getting in contact with her deceased mother, has been established. They have felt their presence through touch and noticed each other anew. The medium has failed in her original mission, yet she has joined the father and his daughter by making them sit by each other and hold their hands. The scene takes place at a round table, with three feuding persons sitting by it and holding hands. It takes the whole night to finally accept each other. Viewers, who know such situations from their own experience, feel the difficult emotions arising at such a moment and are aware of how hard it is to overcome one's feelings. On the other hand, they understand the motivation of the characters and feel empathy with them; and with some help of haptic imagination and memories the viewers almost "feel" the touch of their hands.

CHAPTER V

Haptic Aesthetics

A couple of years ago I had an opportunity to visit an interactive exhibition *Niewidzialna Wystawa (Invisible Exhibition)*, which is still (in 2022) available at Atlas Tower in Warsaw. Visitors are taken for a one hour tour in complete darkness by visually impaired or totally blind curators, who describe the realities of their lives in subsequent theme rooms. They present practical solutions worked out by designers that are to help them in everyday activities, like pouring a proper amount of water into a cup, dressing, or even cycling.

One of the rooms at *the Invisible Exhibition* is devoted to art. The visitors are expected to touch a replica of a renowned work of art and guess what it is. On this occasion I asked about the way in which blind persons could experience visual arts and on what they concentrated in aesthetic experience. Regrettably, no concrete answer was given. My guide had no idea what I was talking about. Special tours at art galleries for visually impaired or blind persons are limited to the game of guessing what a given work represents.

The above situation has made me wonder if such a poor access of blind persons to works of art is the only possibility in view of their impairment. If the fact that the sense of touch is involved solely for functional tasks results from neglecting it in educational process, or downgrading to second class senses, perhaps it would be possible to stimulate it and use in a completely new way.

It is evident that blind persons cannot experience typical visual arts like persons without the impairment do. It is even hard to describe the work of art, as they cannot see colours, or even understand their very essence. Tom Edison, a blind man who runs his own YouTube channel THE TOMMY EDISON EXPERIENCE, where he explains how he copes with everyday life using other senses, has also mentioned the problem.⁵³ He has called attention to the fact that the notion of colour is known to him exclusively from the language, which anyway characterizes it in an absolutely

⁵³ The Tommy Edison Experience, <https://www.youtube.com/c/TommyEdisonXP/about>, (access: 19/05/2020)

inconsistent way. For example, the sea is blue, but water that makes the sea is transparent. Finding words for works of art shall not help to experience them. Nevertheless, aesthetic experience of at least a part of works could be made available through the sense of touch. Rather than concentrating on a depicting aspect of art and a related possibility of guessing what it depicts, it would be worth to move to an abstract dimension of perception. Following textures of materials, or traits of brush strokes with fingers, examining their forms and contrast between them, their directions and sizes can give some insight into artist's creative expression and accompanying emotions in the process of creation. Naturally, it is not equivalent with seeing the work, yet it is undoubtedly more comprehensive than a guessing game.

5.1. Theory of aesthetic experience and hapticity

My visit to the *Invisible Exhibition* has made me deliberate on the possibility of participation of touch in aesthetic experience. I have wondered if the perception of a work could be fuller, if it involved one more sense. Ultimately, I was curious whether haptic activities, both physical and imaginary, could influence fashion design and perception.

I have commenced my work with the thoughts of Aristotle who was the first person mentioning touch in his works, and positioned it among second-rank senses. For ages the touch was regarded by philosophers as worse, because it was associated with biological motivation and direct involvement. Pythagoras, who was then the first to write about aesthetic experience, compared it to the attitude of a spectator watching the Olympics.⁵⁴ He assumed that the attitude consists in passive observation, the concentration of the sense of sight or hearing on an observed object. As late as in the first half of the 19th century Arthur Schopenhauer made reference to the concept of Pythagoras in his theory of contemplation, which presumed that in order to undergo aesthetic experience one should abandon practical approach to an observed object and passively bury in thoughts about it.⁵⁵

54 W. Tatarkiewicz, op. cit., pp. 379 – 371

55 Ibidem, p. 385

It was only in the 20th century that fundamental changes appeared, in principle due to the progress in social sciences and psychology, where aesthetics was classified to belong, thus becoming an empirical science. One of the most interesting theories of that time was the theory of empathizing developed mainly by Thomas Lipps in 1903, which postulated that the pleasure of experiencing art is in the fact that subjects find their own emotions in the object because they transfer them to the object themselves. That active attitude results from individual associations.⁵⁶ Later on, aestheticians, including Roman Ingarden and Władysław Tatarkiewicz, pursued a more open approach and postulated pluralism of theories of aesthetic experience, which may be active or passive, intellectual or emotional, or may move from one phase to another. The notion of aesthetic experience is not precisely defined, its character is subjective and depends on the kind of art and personality of the subject.

The thought about experiencing art was going hand in hand with practice. As I have mentioned in the chapter on haptic imagination, looking for new forms of expression 20th century artists have moved the existing borders. The notion of a haptic work has appeared, igniting the discussion on its definition. Modern art engages the touch on both sides: members of the audience and authors of works of art. The latter experience it through the direct contact with the material, their hands leaving their marks in the object.

The analysis of modern approach of aestheticians to the subject of aesthetic experience and haptic works of art has led me to the conclusion that haptic mechanisms functioning in fine arts may equally appear in design.

I am aware of the existence of haptic design, including fashion design, yet in my opinion it is strictly of functional character. It is not generally discussed and thus absent from public awareness, though it makes an important aspect influencing both usage and sale.

56 W. Tatarkiewicz, op. cit., pp. 390-391

Chapter VI

Haptic activities in fashion

International food producers who supply consumers in different regions of the world have to adjust their products to their expectations. Alongside taste and smell, preferences include also the texture of food, that is how it is felt in the mouth. Haptic attributes of vegetables, yoghurts, or chocolate bars are so vital for their sale that big food companies do not hesitate to invest in several scientific and sociological surveys to be able to suit their products to a particular taste.⁵⁷

The results of surveys are not available to the public, they are a trade secret, strictly confidential and protected against competitors on the market. I have not found any similar analyses of consumers' haptic preferences in fashion. Even if some have been made, they are not available to third parties. However, basing on general knowledge and common experience, one may assume that most buyers of clothes pay attention to the quality of the fabric, and whether it feels pleasant or irritates the skin. In the decision-making process clients often unconsciously check the texture of the surface, even though they do not try on the clothes. The mere possibility of feeling the garment and inspecting its physical character is an important element of deciding.

However, in the era of online shopping this possibility has become scant, so online shops are trying to stimulate clients' haptic imagination by photos showing for example close-ups of the fabric, details of texture, and the way the garment fits, with the aim to refer the image to previously accumulated experience in that matter.

The character of preferred fabric is determined by the function of the garments.

The task of particular elements of sports clothes, intended for dynamic activity, is to support their users. The layer nearest the skin, i.e., tops, bras, boxer shorts, is tight-fitting: it does not restrict movement, shapes the body and has positive effect on blood supply. The investigations of Martin Grunwald and his works on a suit for

⁵⁷ M. Grunwald, *op. cit.*, p. 173

anorexics (already discussed in Chapter 1.3) show that tight-fitting sportswear makes persons working out at the gym “feel” their bodies more precisely, and be more aware of their anatomy and the relation with space. Basing on my personal observation I know that when I work on particular parts of muscles, which I want to activate and build, it is easier to reach them consciously when I feel the pressure in the place I intend to work on. It may also be of special importance for those who have just started attending the gym and have not worked on their body as yet. The sportswear fabric is smooth and elastic in order to adjust to the shape of the body.

When one’s activity is limited practically to minimum, the needs are just the opposite. During the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown, when most time was spent indoors, production of homewear clothing has soared. Clothes for walking around the house have appeared even in couture houses, which normally concentrate on elegant and official garments, and have not offered such products before. Comfortable garments do not tighten the body and are not tight-fitting, do not press skin receptors, have no rigid form, and do not stimulate the body; on the contrary, they try to protect it against external stimuli, in line with the above mentioned cocooning trend. Homewear is mainly knitted or made from delicate fabric (like flannel), to make its wearer relax, and feel safe and warm.

The stimulation of touch receptors, or its absence, is one of the simplest haptic tasks to be completed by clothes.

The above examples show basic ways of using haptic thinking in fashion design, which I was aware of both as a designer and a user. My intention has been to explore what other activities connected with touch may influence consumer’s experience.

Chapter VII

Installation “NOW, HERE, ME” – research for my collection

Puzzled by the words of my guide at the *Invisible Exhibition* I conducted some research to check the way in which using the sense of touch by itself may impact the viewer’s emotions. For the exhibition *Ochrona. Funkcja a estetyka (Protection. Function and aesthetics)* held at the Gallery of the Academy of Fine Arts in Łódź, ul. Piotrkowska 68, between 19/04/2016 and 06/05/2016, I developed an installation “NOW, HERE, ME”, comprising eight closed boxes covered with black fabric. In one of walls of each box there was an opening that led to a narrow tunnel sewn from black fabric. The tunnel went down the box and ended at its bottom, where one or more things were placed. I gave much thought to what should be put into the boxes. I made several sketches and samples, reflecting on attributes of objects that would stimulate imagination by their touch itself. The visitors at the exhibition were encouraged to put the palms of their hands into the tunnels. Then they were handed in a questionnaire and their task was to describe their feelings on touching an object hidden inside the box. In each case the Q&A form looked the same:

Box No. X

What did you feel?

- irritation
- curiosity
- pleasure
- indifference
- unpleasantness
- disgust
- other:

What were your associations with the exhibit?

.....

The questionnaire was the essence of the research and a challenge to the participants. They could choose some options from the list and add their own

comment. Most persons placed a tick next to “curiosity” and one more emotion, positive or negative. Curiosity was the first step to further exploration and analysis of own feelings.

The questionnaires were completed correctly by eighty-three women and thirty-two men.

Women

Female participants of the survey were aged 21 to 60+, the largest group being in the age of 21-30, i.e. students and young graduates of mainly arts and humanities courses.

Before the basic phase of the test, i.e. checking the contents of boxes, persons filling in the questionnaire were asked to answer the following four questions:

1. Can you imagine what a given object is like in touch?

A vast majority was convinced, or almost convinced, that they could; only seven persons expressed some doubts about it.

2. In your opinion, what is most important in the perception by means of touch?

The dominating answer was texture.

3. Which of the fabrics/ textures/ objects are pleasant to you, and which are unpleasant?

The question appealed to haptic imagination. Not even one thing was evoking the same feelings, and the answers were diverse.

4. Arrange senses, at your own discretion, according to their significance for perception, starting from the most important one (from 1 to 5)

The sight won, which came as no surprise. The touch was on the third place.

The second part of the questionnaire concerned solely the boxes and their contents.

Box No. 1

The end part of the tunnel was trimmed with short hair faux fur. The arrangement of the strips of fabric was to allow persons moving their hands inside the box to experience the touch of fur in or against the direction of hair growth. Additionally, drops made from polymer glue were arranged irregularly on the surface of the fur. They were spatial and smooth.

That object was assessed very positively; three most popular reactions were curiosity, pleasure, and indifference, in that order. In the comments there were expressions from the world of biology, like vagina, papillae, dry moss, animal hair, a pug dog, or a horse. The other class of associations involved things related to old homes, like an old armchair, an aunt's pillowcase, a wardrobe, or an overcoat. There appeared also negative associations, like a dirty cow.

Box No. 2

At the bottom of the tunnel there was a strip of hand-made knit, with real hair plait weaved into it.

The exhibit was arousing interest, but unlike the fur from Box No. 1 it evoked negative emotions: three most popular emotions were unpleasantness, curiosity and disgust, in that order. Hair usually made the participants think of someone else's tangled and dirty hair in a shower drain or soup. Some associated the combination of yarn and human hair with dust balls, moustache, or a dead rat. Although in question 3 of the first part of the questionnaire hair was declared as arousing mixed feelings, direct touch made the feelings explicitly negative. Perhaps the unknown source of hair could be of some importance here.

Box No. 3

A rough, openwork washcloth was placed at the bottom. It did not arouse any strong feelings, three most popular emotions included curiosity, indifference, and pleasure, in that order. However, the texture of the washcloth was compared to elements of

everyday life, like an armchair, a carpet slipper, a coat full of holes, an uncomfortable and ugly bra, a pocket with a hole, old clothes, and quite surprisingly to a tree or bark.

Box No. 4

On the tunnel walls there was a three-dimensional hand-made embroidery pattern resembling a nipple, and at the bottom there was stuck a silicone cast of a nipple. Most respondents recognized the object and were interested in it, but some had negative connotations unrelated to a nipple, like a piece of chewing gum chewed and spat out, a teat, old sweets in a handbag, acne, drops, moles, or a Chinese toy. The emotions were curiosity, indifference and unpleasantness, in that order.

Box No. 5

At the bottom of the tunnel there was an embroidery hoop with an embroidered abstract pattern. I used varied yarns for the embroidery, so the pattern was contrastive: soft in some places and coarse in others. Three most popular emotions were curiosity, indifference and pleasure, in that order. Most connotations oscillated around memories of home, like a pilled bedspread, a rough wall, a brush, grandmother, an embroidered dress, a small animal, peaceful life. To my surprise some negative opinions appeared too, relating the abstract composition to a scar, rash, or even old tights.

Box No. 6

At the end of the tunnel there were silicone fingers wrapped in soft fabric. Three most popular emotions were unpleasantness, disgust, and curiosity, in that order. There appeared two groups of reactions. When respondents took the fingers literally, their reaction was definitely negative: they thought about limp bodies, corpses, dead rodents, tentacles, or intestines. The other group approached the fingers in a more abstract way and found them somewhat funny, recalling memories from the childhood, like cheap toys, worn dolls, child's fingers, or "harmless devil's horns".

Box No. 7

At the bottom of the box there was a sponge with toothpicks stuck in it. The toothpicks were arranged to create a wave-like texture. It was formed in a smooth line, though it was made of sharp elements. The whole was covered with chiffon. Three most popular emotions were unpleasantness, curiosity, and pleasure, in that order. I was surprised by such a negative reception. Basing on comments, I may conclude that for the assessment sharp endings of toothpicks were most essential. They recalled unpleasant objects and moments, including acupuncture, a stubble field, a burr, dirty and neglected stockings, or hairbrushes full of hair. Some positive opinions mentioned a massager, or brushing hair in the morning.

Box No. 8

The contents of Box No. 8 resembled somewhat the contents of Box No. 6 as it housed a silicone cast of the whole palm of the hand. Again, there were two dominating groups, with a predominance of a negative one. Three most popular emotions were curiosity, unpleasantness, and disgust, in that order. Additional descriptions were exceptionally extensive. The following phrases were repeated: dead body, larvae, udders, fear, anxiety, evil, tentacles, a sweaty hand, a spider, stickiness. However, there were also persons who interpreted the touch of an artificial and cold, yet quite naturally soft hand as “Hattifatteners”, “a good creature shaking hands”, a doll, or noodles.

Summing up, female respondents strongly engaged in the task. Most of them added emotional commentaries, sometimes with multiple exclamation marks. The connotations were drawn from the texture and from the shape, and referred to private memories. Naturally, attempts were made to guess what was inside each box, but few questionnaires were limited to dry analysis. Most women let their imagination run free and looked in the boxes for themselves. Though the touch came third in the ranking of senses, it has turned out that an emotional load of haptic activities may strongly move and influence human psyche.

Men

Questionnaires completed by men were totally different. First of all, handwritings were indecipherable, the answers were written very briefly and carelessly, with anger. Some were incomplete, as if a respondent got irritated in the course of writing. Most male respondents expected some sort of riddles inside the boxes, so they were disappointed with an abstract character of objects. They concentrated on giving a correct answer, and not on their emotions or connotations. The comments included phrases like “boring”, “nonsense”, or “stupid”.

I have decided not to analyse them thoroughly, as they were incomplete and their message was unclear, which prevented me from reaching coherent conclusions. However, what I could read from them is that women have definitely more active and much more developed sense of touch. In view of the fact I decided that my doctoral collection shall be addressed to women aged 21-40, that is a group most strongly represented in the survey.

Chapter VIII

The work on the collection

My aim was to create a collection of women’s clothes, with an emphasis on sensations evoked by the sense of touch.

Acting jointly with the sense of sight, the touch was expected to intensify direct and indirect sensations of persons wearing the clothes, or just watching them. Usually, the touch is not engaged intentionally in the cognitive process, therefore the designing stage has been preceded with the search for proper tactile means of expression, which has facilitated making final decisions about aesthetics and technologies to be used.

8.1. The search for forms of expression

The first stage was to find concrete solutions that would meet the assumed requirements. I started with hand-made embroidery made from contrasting yarns, a soft and a rough one, both types being of white colour. Compositions created on an embroidery hoop varied in size and shape, and were of open and dynamic character, which guaranteed the changeability of haptic sensations as fingers skimming the embroidery were stimulated in a positive way.

That experience has led me to conclusions about shapes and materials to be used for my collection. It is vital to select diversified yarns, that would contrast with both themselves and the background, and to apply them alternately. Moreover, sensations are more intensive, when the embroidered shapes are contrasted and the density of their arrangement varies. The next step was to convert the above conclusions into my own mode of quilting on fabric. I used a household sewing machine for embroidering various simple patterns. Intriguing effects were achieved when elements were close to one another, or when the fabric with the padding was only spot quilted.

I have applied the above experiments for the first time in an asymmetric jacket. Shapes embroidered on a white background resemble hand-made drawings – lines, dots, geometrical figures that have become three-dimensional. They may be tracked with eyes, or with fingers, which is a double stimulation for a viewer. Embroideries differ in shape and size, they appear individually, or in groups. To emphasize that effect visually, I used two subtle colours.

A totally different effect, discrete and soothing this time, was achieved by spot and seemingly random quilting of the satin fabric. The colour of thread used for that embroidery is very close to the colour of fabric, so it does not stand out. Subtle ripples appearing on the fabric make one think of satin bedding sets freely thrown on a bed. These connotations stimulate haptic imagination, and in effect a pleasing, wrapping sensation is expected. From that fabric a large jacket, which alludes to cocooning trend and is an element of the first styled look, has been made.

I have applied the principles worked out in preliminary tests for two kinds of embroidery patterns I have designed: loop embroidery pattern (used in big aerodynamic elements) and flat embroidery pattern (used in tiny shapes, machine-made on a dark velvet fabric). The two kinds of embroidery give different visual and haptic effects. To make the newly developed fabric more attractive and add more authorial character to it, I have interfered in machine-made repeatable elements in a unique way, stitching additional embroideries on it with a household sewing machine. The fabric has been used for sewing an oversize asymmetric gilet.

Knitting

Experiments with embroidery have also proved useful for making authorial knitwear. Basing on conclusions about desired contrasts in haptic designs, I have searched for engaging combinations of varying yarns. For the test I have used delicate yarns, cotton strings, natural and artificial fibres, yarns for garments and for decoration purposes. I have made a couple of samples and finally succeeded in finding adequate forms and methods to combine the materials.

To produce knitted jumpers I used traditional technique of hand knitting, and felt their touch in prototypes and then final realizations.

Weaving on a loom

Another technique I have applied was hand weaving on a weaving frame. I have made unique small strips of woven fabric from natural soft yarns and much larger, but extremely delicate, worsted wool. The result was two woven elements of varied texture, which have been sewn on a very soft, hand-made sweater. The dynamic character of woven texture is visually intriguing and encourages physical contact. The yarns used in the design are contrasting in scale and appearance, but they are soft, delicate and reassuring in touch.

Authorial activities

Another hand-made material, totally different technically and visually, is absolutely unique: it has been created by sticking thin rods, originally used for the manufacture of artificial flowers, through loops of ready-made knit fabric.

I have organized the rods in asymmetrical arrangements with a contour taken from the world of nature. Visually dynamic texture, made of identical multiplied elements, is emphasized in motion – the rods are shaking intensively. Groups of rods have a spatial form and distinguish themselves from the background; I have placed them on shoulders and at the neckline of the blouse. This unique knit appears to be definitely more intense and stimulating than the unique knits described before. Its flexible texture meets all haptic expectations, offering a contrast between the rods and the fabric itself and delicately massaging fingers that touch it.

The form of clothing

The touch cannot be reduced to examining the surface of an object by hand. It is each contact of human body with any physical object, which turns one's attention and senses to human corporeality. Alongside garments concentrated around textures, I have also designed form-oriented clothes, emphasized mainly by long strips of fabric. Their idea is best visible in trousers in styled look No. 10, where the strips have been added at waist line. Their function is to enhance dynamism caused by movement, as well as to intensify the perception of one's body by the wearer. The strips are hanging along the body, they brush against legs and provoke hands to move, which facilitates conscious engagement in motion.

8.2. Design tasks

The stimulation of haptic imagination

The first task that I have assigned to myself was to activate the sense of touch by the stimulation of haptic imagination in persons who have no direct contact with

realizations. Earlier analyses have led me to the establishment of garment forms and textures that evoke viewers' own memories and experiences. Connotations aroused by simple watching of clothes activate the sense of touch in viewers as their wish for touching the clothes is stimulated. They cannot experience the character of their surface or their shapes directly, but they automatically start imaging it. This activity is aimed to build aesthetic experiences mainly in observers whose perception is limited to visual one. Pieces of garments that specially appeal to haptic imagination include first of all an oversize jacket made of satin, which is so quilted that it resembles a soft duvet in satin cover wrapping the body; a short jacket with an element shaped like a pillow on the back; sweaters with spatial textures made of contrasting yarns; a gilet made from fabric embroidered by different techniques, whose surface is visually and spatially dynamic.

The stimulation of the sense of touch

Another task that I have assigned to myself was to stimulate the sense of touch of a wearer of the collection. My aim was to make my designs influence her sensations also through the touch. In order to reach the sense of touch I have used fabrics with a good grip and expressive textures, and I have designed such shapes of garments that have corresponded to the planned function of a given styled look. The clothes that were to soothe their wearers and cut them off from external stimuli have been made from soft fabrics, with oversized forms wrapping the body, and without any redundant details. Styled looks referring to sensory deprivation have symmetrical composition, they are built in layers, which gradually reduce contact with the environment, including the shut-off of the sense of sight. Basically, this group includes thick jackets combined with long trousers and dresses, and with elaborate headgear. Successive designs stimulate their wearers and help them concentrate and open to the relation with themselves and the world. Forms of garments become asymmetric, their lengths are varied, and spatial textures and significant details appear, attracting haptic attention and possibly giving the sensation of massage. An asymmetrical jacket with a cold shoulder and varying length of sleeves, an embroidered jacket with cuts and appliquéd tapes, sweaters with spatial and dynamic textures created by both traditional knitting techniques and weaving techniques are an illustration here.

The idea behind the last group of designs, which unveil the body to the largest extent, is revealed in movement. Their character is determined mainly by the form, yet the details are of some importance, too. The designs that allow to feel one's body better and experience its dynamics are represented mainly by trousers with sheets of fabric, slits and strips that stroke legs while walking or jumping, and make the air flow stronger, which stimulates touch receptors in the skin. Trouser legs and fabric edges are hemmed with fringed bias tapes, which weight down the fabric and enhance the feeling of movement. A similar role is played by the texture made from multiplied rods appliquéd to knitted blouses. The wearer feels their stimulating texture with her fingers, when she touches them, and their strong vibrations, when she moves. Fabrics used for styled looks encouraging wearer's activity are still pleasant, but not neutral:

a blazer sewn from slightly rough short-haired fur, or a large slippery jacket gently slipping off shoulders, should be mentioned here. Details are more visible here – there appear metal press studs, buckles, gathers, fringes and wide strings.

All the designs are comfortable, friendly for their user and her environment. Their varying shapes, fabrics and textures diversify the character of their influence. The collection starts with closed and restrictive forms, then moves to stimulating ones, and ends with dynamizing ones. All garments refer to hapticity, which is absorbed into the process of cognition and becomes a part of aesthetic experience. The touch is important also in the context of functionality, as it facilitates predictions about the impact of a given outfit on the wearer's reaction: whether it shall help her to calm down, concentrate, or become active physically.

8.3 MY TOUCH – my own experience

A major part of the collection has been handmade by me, mostly due to the authorial, sometimes even experimental, character of planned actions, but also due to the fact that I wanted to experience the process of creation through the touch. Therefore, I could systematically analyse interdependencies between the perception of textures and shapes by the author and the user.

Chapter IX

The fashion collection

The collection consists of twelve women's styled looks. Authorial textures and weaves give it a visional character, though its big part is fully functional. The collection is intended for autumn/winter, as I wanted to create multi-layered looks, with warm outerwear covering large parts of the body. It is basically addressed to women aged 21–40, the age having been determined on the basis of the discussed questionnaire, yet it is not my intention to set any age bracket. In my opinion, the required attributes are openness to conscious perception of garments and new sensory experiences, rather than courage and young age.

The description of particular styled looks:

LOOK No. 1

The most built-up look consists of the following:

- a yellow transparent turtleneck blouse from stretch tulle fabric, with flock-printed dots and an openwork pattern at clavicle level,
- long straight trousers from ready-made sweater knit fabric, in light warm beige colour, with in-seam pockets and an elastic waistband,
- a quilted jacket, knee length, from velour fabric, with a hood, pockets, press studs, and crêpe strips on the sleeves and over the waist as an additional tying element,
- a long oversized jacket from satin woven fabric, in light beige colour, irregularly spot quilted, with braces and crêpe strips for tying,
- a headgear from light yellow baseball cap, with thin layered fringes stuck to the peak,
- cream fishnet gloves from 1960s.

The garments limit the contact with the external world, significantly reducing perception through the senses of touch, sight and hearing. Visually, the whole look resembles a protective cocoon. It has been made from smooth fabrics, pleasant to the touch and facilitating relaxation.

LOOK No. 2

The look consists of the following:

- dusky blue oversize dress with mandarin collar and two-button back closure, sleeves with channel hems with strings for tying. The dress is long, flaring, with breast darts.
- a long pink dress from stretch tulle fabric, with flock-printed dots, neckline closed with snaps, sleeves with a channel hem with strings, with tulle frills sewn around neckline, closure and the whole dress at breast level,
- a short quilted jacket from muddy pink woven fabric and dark beige crêpe. The shape of shoulders resembles a pillow. Additionally, a protruding element that looks like a pillow is sewn at the back. From beneath the pillow two long and wide crêpe strips come out.

The look consists of three layers, which remarkably reduce external stimuli, as their forms are loose-fitting and long; and the fabrics are subtle, without any unnecessary details. The tulle dress resembles an old-fashioned nightdress, which combined with bedclothes-like forms reminds of peace and rest at home.

LOOK No. 3

The look consists of the following:

- a yellow transparent turtleneck blouse from stretch tulle fabric, with flock-printed dots and an openwork pattern at clavicle level,
- an asymmetrical quilted hip length jacket, from pink velour woven fabric, with right cold shoulder. Over the waist there are crêpe strips going over the back and making a decorative element there.
- an asymmetrical top from pink velour woven and cinnamon red crêpe fabric, with shoulder straps, front closure with big silver hook and eye fasteners covered partly with two pink tassels. The left front of the top is made of two layers.

- light beige jogger trousers from velour knit, with in-seam pockets, an elastic waistband and a channel with a yellow round elastic with stoppers. Legs rib-trimmed, with an elastic.
- a headgear from light yellow baseball cap, with thick layered fringes stuck to the peak.

The look is built-up, but has some elements that open its wearer to the environment – a cold shoulder and an asymmetrical form of a jacket allow for a gradual influx of stimuli.

LOOK No. 4

The look consists of the following:

- an oversize beige crêpe T-shirt,
- oversize dungarees, with flared legs and in-seam pockets. From the waist level, strips of fabric coming down to the ground are sewn into the external seams of legs. Their side edges and legs are hemmed with fringed cotton tape. Braces are made of long strips fastened with pink gold metal buckles. The whole is sewn from light brown crêpe fabric.
- a slightly oversize blazer, simple form, no collar, cuffs fastened with press studs. The whole is sewn from brown short hair faux fur that has also been used in Box No. 1, which was a part of the exhibition at the Gallery of the Academy of Fine Arts in Łódź described above.

The look is loose-fitting and does not constrict movements, which are emphasized by loosely hanging strips at leg fronts. The fabrics are pleasant to the touch, and the fur gives the sense of security and mental comfort.

LOOK No. 5

The look consists of four parts:

- a yellow transparent turtleneck blouse from stretch tulle fabric, with flock-printed dots and an openwork pattern at clavicle level,

- a short beige sweater, hand-knitted from polyester Minki yarn. At the front and at the back elements woven on a small loom have been appliquéd. I used linen thread and natural yarns of different colours and sizes, including worsted wool.
- long cream straight trousers made from Orlando woven fabric, elastic waistband, elastic hem,
- beige trousers from jacquard woven fabric. The trousers do not have a big part of their front and back on the external side of the leg. They are tied with strips of fabric at the level of smaller hips, and with strips from the basic jacquard woven fabric above the ankle.

Despite simple forms, the look has a stimulating effect as it is built on contrast: diversified textures of knit fabric, woven appliqués, tulle fabric, and jacquard woven fabric. The length of particular elements should not be overlooked: they are arranged in such a way that they intertwine and allow to feel different haptic sensations at different levels.

LOOK No. 6

The look consists of the following:

- a yellow transparent turtleneck blouse from stretch tulle fabric, with flock-printed dots and an openwork pattern at clavicle level,
- hand-knitted sweater, wide short sleeves, from some various yarns:
 - beige acrylic yarn with admixture of wool
 - salmon-pink cotton yarn
 - beige polyester Minky yarn with delicate hair
 - light beige polyester Dolphin Bay yarn, spacious, very soft
 - brick red acrylic yarn
 - light beige cotton string, used for an element at the sweater back, from which a long plait trailing on the ground comes out

- long bright grey/beige trousers from Orlando woven fabric, with flared legs, elastic waistband, side in-seam pockets. Into side seams there are sewn some strips of fabric that fall below the knee. Legs hemmed with fringed cotton tape.
- a short asymmetrical quilted jacket from cream polyester, with several authorial embroideries stitched on a household sewing machine. The embroideries have different shapes (dots, teardrops, lines) and sizes. On the left side and at the back there are spatial decorations based on openings cut in the jacket surface. The protruding warm lining is edged with tulle and synthetic fringed tape. One sleeve is too long and restricts movements of the left hand. Fringes appear on both sleeves. The jacket is fastened with press studs placed on a high collar and with a belt over the waist.

Though the look consists of some layers that hide the body, it has many details that activate touch receptors. The fringes and the plait stimulate movement, and varied textures stimulate the tips of fingers. The asymmetry of sleeves is important as it restricts automatic movements.

LOOK No. 7

The look consists of four parts:

- a blue transparent turtleneck blouse from stretch tulle fabric, with flock-printed dots and an openwork pattern at clavicle level,
- white and blue oversized sweater, hand-knitted with knitting needles in different sizes, made from contrasting yarns:
 - spacious polyester Dolphin Bay yarn, giving large and soft forms, white and grey blue in colour
 - tiny ribbon-like viscose yarn, uneven dark blue
 - thin coarse, slightly transparent yarn, combined with Baby Dolphin yarn
 - cotton string that makes sweater knit and an additional overscale pattern on its surface
- large bright grey/blue trousers from Orlando woven fabric, elastic waistband, side in-seam pockets. Into the waist there are sewn very long crêpe strips,

which may be tied on holographic semicircles placed at lower parts of legs. Legs hemmed with channels with strips, to be tied at the front of the foot.

- dark grey gloves from velour knit fabric, of two different forms: one is short and smooth, the other is longer, and there are black feathers stuck at the tips of fingers.

The form and elements of the look suggest peaceful home-like character. However, contrasting yarns, which give a dynamic effect in the context of hapticity, and long strips, which move and rub legs in movement, stimulate the wearer. Moreover, feathers lengthen fingers and take over their role in touching; they subtly brush the skin and activate observer's haptic memory and adequate associations.

LOOK No. 8

The look consists of the following:

- a yellow transparent turtleneck blouse from stretch tulle fabric, with flock-printed dots and an openwork pattern at clavicle level,
- a short écru blouse from ready-made knit fabric. The bottom edge finished with channels with lime cotton tape. At the front, on the shoulders and at the back there is authorial texture made of several hundred small rods for artificial flowers, in matching colours: cream and pastel green.
- wide cream trousers above the ankle made from Orlando woven fabric, in-seam pockets, elastic waistband, elastic hem.

The dominating element of the look is a blouse with dynamic texture that reveals itself in touch and movement, as well as in the aesthetic character of the blouse due to a composition of multiplied rods. In this way the texture directly stimulates the touch, and indirectly the imagination.

LOOK No. 9

The look consists of three parts:

- a blue transparent turtleneck blouse from stretch tulle fabric, with flock-printed dots and an openwork pattern at clavicle level,
- a very long blue dress with a left side slit and a waist tie. The top of the dress consists of two overlapping parts with metal semicircles, through which long strips have been tied. The whole is made from crêpe fabric.
- a white hand-knitted gilet, knee length, with elements knitted in rice stitch. White tassels are sewn at the front.

The look activates its wearer; a side slit allows sweeping movements of legs, stimulated by strips falling onto the body at waist and shoulder level.

LOOK No. 10

The look consists of the following:

- an oversized charcoal grey T-shirt sewn from thin polyamide fabric
- thin loose-fitting dark blue denim trousers, elastic waistcoat, in-seam pockets. The fronts are made of two overlapping parts sewn into the sides and the waist. Four very long strips are sewn in at hip level.
- quilted oversized jacket with in-seam pockets, sewn from two polyamide fabrics in shades of grey, knee length. The form of shoulders resembles a duvet. At the back there are two elements resembling small pillows from which wide polyamide strips, folded in half, come out and reach the ground. Tie waist.

The look is considerably built-up, a loose-fitting jacket is wrapping the body, its form associates with calmness and statics. However, freely moving slippery fabrics and open trousers fronts subtly stimulate their wearer to become active.

LOOK No. 11

The look consists of the following:

- an oversized charcoal grey T-shirt sewn from cotton fabric with admixture of wool,

- wide charcoal grey trousers sewn from cotton fabric with admixture of wool, side in-seam pockets. Long strips are sewn into the waist, and a separate pocket with a press stud fastening is fastened to the strips also with press studs. Legs hemmed with fringe black cotton tape.
- an oversized asymmetrical gilet sewn from brown velour fabric. On its right side there are flat and loop computer embroideries in contrasting colours: light pink, beige, and taupe. Additionally, I have put authorial black and pale pink embroideries stitched with a household sewing machine. The shapes of some loop embroideries are emphasized with synthetic claret fringe tapes. At waist level there are thick beige strings for tying of the gilet.

The main element of the look is the gilet with rich spatial decorations in the form of embroideries and movable appliqués that stimulate the sense of touch. The form of the whole is balanced and comfortable, it does not restrict any movements.

LOOK No. 12

The look consists of the following:

- a loose-fitting dark blue top sewn from cotton shirt denim. The top rests on an elastic under the bust, the front and the back are joined by narrow shoulder straps.
- a dark brown blouse from ready-made sweater knit fabric, channels with a round elastic on the sleeves. The bottom edge trimmed with channel hems, with knitted strips that drape the front and the back. On both shoulders there is an authorial texture made of several hundred thin rods, originally used for the manufacture of artificial flowers, in two contrasting colours: light brown and dark sea green.
- thin loose-fitting dark blue denim trousers, elastic waistband, in-seam pockets, slits in external sides starting from knees. Strips of fabric at hip and thigh level, joined with the whole by metal elements.

The look has clearly activating character. The texture placed on the shoulders stimulates hands that touch it, and emphasizes movements of the wearer by following their rhythm. The strips perform the same function: in movement they rub

against legs and make the wearer more aware of her activity. The slits in the trousers allow to feel the space between the body and the fabric, that is the relocation of trousers in relation to legs.

Conclusion

The hardest test for the collection was a photo shoot, which gave the first occasion to see the garments on a wearer in a room. We started the final documentation with the most built-up Look No. 1, referring to sensory deprivation. After some shoots the model fell on the ground. She said later that she felt “cut off from the surroundings”. Her whole face, including eyes, and also hands and legs were covered; a thick hood muffled the sounds; warm jackets were put one on another. All that significantly reduced the inflow of stimuli to her body. The situation was unpleasant, yet it has clearly showed that the design concept has brought the expected result. The lack of information coming from the senses has, in a sense, turned off the body. With each layer taken off her, the model was becoming more clear-headed and aware of her body and its movements.

Successive shoots were taken more cautiously, with a fan on – which reached the model as a wind brushing her skin through her sense of touch. Each subsequent styled look stirred up a discussion about its haptic attributes and was a starting point for ideas about the arrangement of the model’s body, its movements and the movements of parts of garments. All applied solutions are of pleasant character, they stimulate the sense of touch, which is to be either soothed and reassured, or activated, in a delicate and friendly way. The model followed the guidelines “coming” from particular elements of clothing and her intuition has helped to choose the best way to render the idea behind the design.

As I have mentioned before, the notion of the touch has not been unequivocally defined; it is still discovered anew and becoming more and more appreciated, I hope. The subject of haptic collection could have been developed in several ways, and the choice of only one of them was difficult and restrictive. The design path I have

chosen is a combination of visual ideas and practical solutions, which reflect the most interesting problems and conceptions I have met in the course of my research.

An aspect of my whole above work that is of great importance for me is the fact that I have not only stimulated the touch in the users of the collection, but I have also developed it in myself. As an author, I have experienced successive textures and forms I have created, and I have felt their surfaces, but I have also shaped them by my touch and left my mark in them. All the solutions feel nice to the touch, yet the process of their creation has not always been pleasant. Textures made from small rods for artificial flowers that had to be stuck through the loops in the knit fabric are the best example here. The process was painful and time-consuming, my fingertips were rubbed raw. However, most of my authorial hand-made activities were pleasant. The repetitive character of movements while knitting or weaving had a calming effect and allowed to concentrate on creative thinking. I had time and an opportunity to systematically analyse what I feel with my fingers and what emotions I want to evoke in the wearer of the clothes, and in a mere observer of the collection.

The concentration on the combination of my personal feelings and the feelings of the collection's users reminds me about dualistic character of the touch. The characteristic feature of the sense of touch is the presence of two parties – the one that touches and the one that is touched, even if it is the same person. My collection makes me get in direct touch with its user, and although the event shall not happen at the same time and place, we are joined at a metaphorical level. My haptic activities and thoughts translated into particular elements of the collection shall “touch” the person who will wear it. The awareness of creating such a relation gives great satisfaction to me as a designer.

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Moodboard

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