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## Solen KIPOZ

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**SLOWNESS IN  
FASHION**

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## **Dixi Books**

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Slowness in Fashion

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# SLOWNESS IN FASHION

SOLEN KIPOZ



*The Voice of the New Age*



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# Foreword

Alison Gwilt

For the many people who lived in a pre-industrial Western society, clothes were amongst their most valuable possessions (Crane 2000). Cloth was often so expensive it was exchanged for payment in lieu of gold. Everyday life involved clothes being used and reused, pawned, sold and re-sold, bequeathed, and at the end of its wearable life, discarded and collected by the “ragpicker” to be used again. Historically then, cloth has always been a valuable commodity, but perceptions of material value was, and still is very different across society. As Strasser noted in respect to how waste materials are valued, the “...ones who perceive value are nearly always the ones with less money...” while the “...wealthy can afford to be wasteful.” (1999, p.9).

The contemporary discourse around slow fashion resonates with this historical account of “valuable” clothes. There has been much discussion on how we should make clothes less transitory, more durable and longer lasting. However, these practical applications are only part of the story. Despite the many researchers and theorists who have argued that attitudes and behavior towards consumption needs to change, our machine-made fast fashion products allow people across the social divide to effortlessly consume clothes. Strasser’s depiction of the perceptions of value and being wasteful has become somewhat blurred in contemporary society; clothes are now more accessible, cheaper and disposable and serve a wide range of distinct market levels. And too often through media saturated marketing the value in owning clothes has shifted from the value of the physical materials to the value of the brand.

However the “conscious citizen” is helping to motivate the fashion industry to change its practices, although solutions are often connected to encouraging “conscious consuming” - buying more - but “better” stuff. The conscious citizen demands that

fashion brands become more transparent across their supply chain, less exploitative of workers and do better for the environment. And so the industry has to do much more. While our conscious citizens provide a beacon of hope for an alternate fashion system it is evident that the sale of new clothes is still on the rise. And as highlighted in the Ellen MacArthur Foundation's report (2017), of real concern is that clothing users are now wearing garments less often and keeping them for a shorter period of time. These points beg the question, how can we encourage people to resist the (over) consumption of clothes, and further, keep the clothes that they own in active use for as long as possible.

In introducing this book, Solen Kipoz asks whether slow fashion can become a distinctive characteristic in fashion production and design? Since we know that design decisions – good or bad - impact on the life of clothes it is not impossible to propose that slow principles could underpin the creation of all clothing types. How might the fashion system look then? As the earlier section notes the challenges are manifold. Although organisations around the world, such as the UK registered charity, Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP), are working with industry stakeholders and consumers to spread their collective knowledge in this area to widely support change, the impact of these efforts is still not apparent in the everyday life of producing and consuming clothes. These challenges for the fashion industry are examined within this book.

Additionally a timely range of perspectives and approaches are also presented that provide clues as to how the transition to slow may occur. Slowness in association with localism could, as Fuad-Luke suggests, provide a collaborative culture of fashion. Bringing together local and global communities to collectively unite for a slow fashion movement. Many of the authors, such as Clark, suggest slow thinking also needs to consider the relationships people have with their clothes, and examine how they are used. And whether, as Esculapio remarks, the designer can play a part in fostering positive material interactions. Clothes need to stimulate meaningful interactions with their users, for an increased active life; a garment should be “fit for purpose”, desirable to consumers and developed for longevity (Gwilt and

Pal, 2017). Reflecting on Payne's scrutiny of aesthetic durability and disposability, it is clear that our clothes should be adaptable, evolving, almost "living" artifacts that do no harm and instead enrich the well-being of individuals, societies and the natural world. This vision requires designers to play an active role in helping create a material and emotional value on which clothing users build meaningful relationships.

But who can afford to be slow, asks Otto von Busch. Frequently sustainability is perceived as a middle class pursuit. Strasser's point made earlier, clearly demonstrates how the impact of a social class divide is felt when it comes to the value of stuff, including clothes. The price of slow fashion products are often higher than "non-sustainable" items, largely to reflect the true cost of goods and labour involved in making high quality clothes. This means that frequently slow fashion garments are unaffordable to many people, although this is not always the case. Nonetheless the blame for the over consumption of clothes is often shifted towards low socio-economic communities as the main proponents of fast fashion, which is an unfounded assumption.

It would be good to remember that many people unavoidably live slowly, whether they wish to or not. Living on the margins of society with minimal income often forces an individual to keep clothing for much longer than anticipated. How will the documented shift to an older age demographic in many countries impact on the consumption cycle of clothes, for example. Slowness in fashion requires a deeper examination so that we may understand the challenges and opportunities for the fashion community - the fashion brands, manufacturers and retailers, the workers, the independent makers and producers, and the different clothing users. Kipoz and the contributing authors provide discussion and insight that, in Kipoz's words, offer the promise of a more humane, ethical and slow future.



# PREFACE

Solen Kipoz

“There is a secret bond between slowness and memory, between speed and forgetting... The degree of the slowness is directly proportionate to the intensity of memory; the degree of the speed to the intensity of forgetting.”

Milan Kundera

For fashion, which propounds an ongoing change, “slowness” has become a resistance to the change, an ethical stance paradigm. So much so that, it has become the language and manner of an attitude that is attentive, sensitive and liable to nature and human at the expense of confronting “speed” which is the power of fashion. Considering the fact that the biorythm of many living creatures and phenomena of the nature is fast, speed in itself is not actually something we need to always avoid. On the other hand, we cannot ignore the fact that the concept of speed, like many metabolisms and organisms in nature, is manipulated by a human-centric perspective. In the end, the industrial revolution and the technology are the tools of speed that have been developed to facilitate or enrich human life. Besides, the relationship between slowness and speed may create a contradiction between the natural and the artificial, and as Kundera expresses, it also creates a dichotomy between memory and forgetting, that is to say between the past and the future. Will the intensity of speed in nature be the same as the speed of technology, or will the speed in the past be the same as in today or in the future? In this framework, is “slowness in fashion” about trying to turn back to the speed of fashion in the past?

Slowness in terms of sustainability and slowness in terms of fashion’s memory intersect at a point where the life of a garment can be long. However, as the physical life cycle of a garment cannot be reconciled with the life of fashion, no matter how durable

they are, old clothes remain outside the value chain formed by the economic logic of fashion, or in the best-case scenario they are preserved in museums as a part of material culture. Yet, until the capitalist system replaced use value with exchange value, the life cycle of a garment had been limited to its lifespan. Moreover, today the value of the fashion object, which does not only have a material existence but also has an imagery existence, is measured by a symbolic way.

So, what do we mean by the speed of fashion? Oscar Wilde, one of the co-founders of the aesthetic movement, predicted that the inclination of fashion towards change was driven in mid-19<sup>th</sup> century by seasonality, in a period when the phenomenon of fashion gave its first signals, when he said that "Fashion is a form of ugliness so intolerable that we have to alter it every six months." Indeed, as from 1970s, with the institutionalization of the industry in Western fashion, the fashion cycle required a designer to present a spring/summer, autumn/winter collection at least twice a year. With the globalization corresponding to 2000s, this number increased to four and/or six times a year; now only no more than a dozen high fashion - *haute couture* - fashion houses, offer two collections a year; all the other designers who are working with designer brands - *pret-e-porter* - prepare two other collections in addition to these two called "Resort" and "Pre-fall". Fast fashion brands that are making mass production in the ready to wear garment industry have increased this number to almost eight. While each of these seasons with the appearance of new fashion designs further enlivened with high-budget promotional campaigns tantalizes the consumer, the consumer who thinks they have caught up with the fashion suddenly realizes that the fashion has changed! The clothes in their wardrobe seem ugly, deficient and flawed without going through the physical aging process and these clothes which are put into the process of "artificial obsolescence" by the industry are now turning into worn-out clothes to be discarded.

In this cycle, we may realize that the garment that is presented to us as "new" is not actually an innovative design which gives a fresh new idea, function or form, rather, a new garment is a product that has gone through a change with slight differences

from the original, in details like colour, fabric, rather, cup, length. A fashion sociologist, Fred Davis (1992) likens the fashion cycle to a sea wave. Thus, as one wave disappears, it is replaced by a new one and so fashion, too, keeps waving. On the other hand, it is almost impossible for each individual of the society to keep up with the speed of changes in fashion. At this point, fast fashion confronts us with two different characteristics; first with its characteristic of providing fashion in a cheap and effective way to an audience with limited access to fashion innovations, that is to say democratizing fashion, and secondly with its characteristic of excluding the working classes subjected to modern slavery whose living conditions would never allow them to afford even the cost of cheap clothing. Furthermore, the effects of such fast and cheap fashion production are added to this cost (global warming, release of toxic chemicals, depletion of natural resources and non-biodegradable textile waste, etc.).

Thus, while fast fashion proceeds on its way at full speed, a handful of idealists on the planet has embarked on a quest so as to find an answer to the question “Is it possible to slow down this cycle?” Of course, we should not consider this as an approach that is about leaving fashion idle, stagnant and inertial, or trying to destroy fashion by opposing it. Like most avant-garde and counter movements, this also aims to proceed on its way by adding the concept of “slowness” to fashion, by raising the question “Can slow fashion become the characteristic of fashion?” instead of stating “There can be slow design without fashion.” In this context, professor of fashion studies Hazel Clark’s question in 2008 was meaningful: “Is the combination of slow and fashion an oxymoron?... or a promise for the future?” What made me think, work, produce and write on this subject was, in fact, this question. My collective book *Sustainable Fashion* (2015), which was prepared to share the philosophy and process behind a series of designs I produced in order to search for the answer of this question was actually trying to find and answer to the question “Can fashion be sustainable?” The concept of “slow fashion”, which I discovered as one of the possibilities of acting ethical and responsible, became a loadstar and a guide in that journey as well. In this framework, this book, which I wish to call *Slowness in Fashion*, produced a

reading which uncovers the “slow fashion” paradigm. Yes, slow fashion is a guide and a tool for sustainability and it seems that we do not have much time to do something about it. However, I would like to underline that I take attach importance to the fact that this reading should have a more distant and objective character which abstains an admiration for the concept of “slow fashion” yet, glorifying “slowness”. What is more, with the fact that “slow fashion” along with “slow food”, “slow city”, “slow design”, is one of the shining stars of the last 15 years’ fields of research and practice, I thought it is necessary to seek an answer to the question “Where does slow fashion stand today?”

In the light of these ideas, this book can be considered as a kind of “slow fashion update”. Within this scope, the research texts of eleven valuable experts with critical and analytical perspectives who have mastered the entire corpus of sustainable and slow design/fashion with their ideas, productions and publications, have formed the book’s field of knowledge and discourse. What gave rise to the discussion was the chapter named “Rethinking Slowtopia” of the design theorist Alaistair Fuad-Luke, who conceptualized slow design for the first time 15 years ago. Fuad-Luke provides an insight as to how this concept evolved since its emergence by relaying the development of the “slow” framework. With the question of whether slowness can be a utopia, he focuses on the diversity-oriented and pluralist mission of the slow movement of a utopian world. Additionally, he is analyzing how the Slowtopia might respond to the socio-technological changes in the fluid modernity of the global world that we live in. He discusses how the emphasis of slowness on locality can turn into a slow-diversifying solidarist and collaborative culture, and how the alternative economies of the Slowtopia will take form. This interdisciplinary text of Fuad-Luke designates the meeting points of the textile and fashion design field with other creative disciplines and sectors.

The question of why we should develop a path towards slowness requires a careful analysis of the dominant fashion system. At this point, textile engineer and journalist/blogger Irem Yanpar Cosdan, first of all warns us with her chapter “Sustainable Approaches in Fashion and Textile Supply Chain”



that the sustainability trend also creates a consumption culture. She provides a framework that the truly sustainable process can be read by following all stages of the global supply chain in the fashion industry, and only through this way ethical and fair trade conditions can be achieved to improve the impact of production processes on people and on the environment. As I mentioned above, Hazel Clark updates on the possibility of “slow” and “fashion” coming together, which she questioned ten years after her first article, with the chapter “Slow+Fashion: A Revisited” in this book. A guide for many researchers who have focused on the subject since then, this paper of Clark’s, along with the adaptation of the manifesto at the Slow Design Conference held in Italy in 2006 under the leadership of design theorist Ezio Manzini, presented the outline of slow fashion. This outline was focusing on the potential to create a transparent relationship by destroying hierarchies between designers, producers and consumers; on the possibility of reinterpreting local skills and crafts in contemporary designs to create local economies against the global; and on the fact that emotionally and physically lasting and durable designs can be created with environmentally-friendly materials. Clark, in this article, stresses these principles, but this time with the suggestion of a “slower” fashion sense, she enriches the examples of slow design by turning the route to New York City, where she lives. She also sheds light on the driving force of women in this field with her painstaking study of the body of literature of the past decade.

In his chapter “Positioning Emotionally Durable Fashion: A Practise-Based Approach”, Alex Esculapio associates the relationship we have with clothes in terms of durability with “slowness” by the help of an exhibition of used clothes. The article also deals with how clothes as objects create different meanings and impressions in terms of time and space than our relationships with clothes in everyday life in the perspective of curating and exhibiting experience. A fashion academic working on sustainability, Duygu Atalay emphasizes in the chapter “Traces of Craft in Slow Fashion: Designers & Crafts(wo)men Associations” that clothes whose design, production and consumption are from different parts of the world are considered as “the homeless” of today’s global fashion network. She suggests that this sense of

belonging was lost in clothes. This “loss of aura” as the Marxist thinker Walter Benjamin emphasized, can be gained by storytelling and memory and that this may be possible by slowing down the production process practicing craft. Emphasizing that the notion of value in the slow philosophy is evolving into the what is produced with hand work and carefulness and with manual labor; she points out that the craft highlights cooperation and co-creation as a resistance to global fashion, that the emotional and narrative attachment of the producer to what (s)he produces may bring a more ethical and responsible understanding against the alienation of the crafts(wo)man from the production which is caused by the industrial system.

The South African fashion historian and curator Erica de Greef in her chapter “Two Fashion Tales: Re-use as Memory Practice in South Africa” searches for the past traces of re-use and upcycling, which are adopted as design practices in the slow fashion movement, through the social and political memory of her country. For de Greef, memory is where the old meets the new; De Greef reads how traditional clothing in costume museums transform over time, and analyzes the collections of contemporary South African fashion designers which are based on memory practices reveal this. In her research, remembering emerges as a resistance to the memory that forgets. According to de Greef, pulling out what is in the past means stopping time by activating memory. Slowing down time at the level of renewal that occurs through upcycling, which can have the power to heal and recover from wounds of the past. Within this scope, she shows that upcycling in memory practice displaces and slows down fashion’s linear time.

On the other hand, in the chapter named “Economy Models That Slow Down Fashion: Circular and Sharing Economy” which is written by me, I suggest, on the grounds that the environmental and social impacts of the linearity of the global fashion system which are destructive, not constructive, that a circular and sharing / solidarist / collaborative way of thinking and economic model have a structure that slows down, repairs and improves. In this context, the paper outlines the circular design system by shedding light the waste problem with an elaborate analysis of a life cycle of a fashion garment. Following the footsteps of H. D. Thoreau who

struggled for the environmental problems and human rights in the United Nations of America and M. Gandhi , India's leader of independence , I draw attention as to what kind of a resource the principles of "economic competence" and "the lack of property" creates in today's sharing economy. Yet, an academician working on sustainability in the fashion industry, Alice Payne from Australia, with her chapter "Speed as the Distance Travelled in Time: Re-framing Fast and Slow Fashion in Australia", critically re-examines the "fast fashion" and "slow fashion" dichotomy through a dialectical reading of time and space; and stresses that we should be suspicious towards the unconditional and biased ethical definition of "slow fashion", which evolved as an antidote against the environmental and social impacts of "fast fashion". Payne, reminding us that speed is considered as an ethics of distance and time in the fashion world, suggests that reading the ethics of speed can be done through measured time (chronological) and real time (kairaological); and outlines an impartial ethical inquiry through the fast fashion chains in her country Australia with their slow, fast and distant, close relationships.

There are very few sources that delve into the position of sustainable and slow fashion in design education. Academicians Yuksel Sahin and Sanem Odabasi, who work in the field of fashion and textile design, cover this gap to some extent with their chapter "Approaches on Sustainability and Slow Fashion in Fashion Design Education". They discuss where issues such as sustainability, slowness, ethics and responsibility stand in fashion design education, and how the vision of education can be shaped within possibilities and limitations. They convey their in-depth interviews with educators working and producing on the subject by making the three researches that they conducted transparent. They emphasize the need to internalize the meanings of popular concepts such as sustainable fashion, slow fashion; and to treat "slowness" as a path to sustainability in the construction and implementation of educational methods. An academician working in the field of textile design and sustainability, Nesrin Turkmen, in her writing "Hedonic Fashion Consumption and the Illusion of Happiness: Can We Slow Down?", investigates whether a space for slow fashion can be opened with happiness-oriented designs

against the hedonic consumption model, which is often identified with the fast fashion trend, by focusing on the consumption dimension of the subject. In the modern society, which ensures the continuity of consumption at the same rate as production in order to continue the capitalist system; Türkmen, who brought new expansions in terms of social and positive psychology studies to the act of consumption which is turning into an illusion of happiness, underlines the power of positive designs to change our consumption habits in the “happiness economy”.

The last chapter in the book is “Politics of Time in Slow Design” of Otto von Busch, professor of fashion studies, who frames the concept of social justice in fashion with his studies and publications. The text deals with how equally the time of fashion is distributed among the members of society and between different societies. In this regard; Von Busch, who claims that the consumption patterns created by the temporality of fashion defined by the seasons lead to constant change and renewal of identities, emphasizes that the fashion mechanism that envisages unconditional change has an energy that creates discriminatory and social frictions rather than a balancing and unifying role in society. What Otto von Busch thinks is the role of slowness in the fashion system is that although slowness is a stable ethical orientation that ideally predicts sustainable growth against the destructive effects of fast fashion, it is a trend that must be reached and captured by individuals in society just like fast fashion. By triggering this debate with his question “Who can afford to be slow in today’s society?”, he reminds us that the slow time is also a policy, pointing out that all individuals have access to the “speed of slowness” as a sign of political power. These remarks of Von Busch, who reminds us that slow fashion has an elitist and cliquy side in an ethical discourse like high fashion with the question “At this point then who will hit it?”, brings to mind the question that “Should we progress by criticizing slow fashion while we build it?”

In line with these ideas, the second part of our book “Slowness in Fashion “ gives a place to design and brand stories from Turkey and to the collectives and platforms acting in a social network. The design and brand examples discussed in this selection have focused on sustainability since their formation in terms

of the resulting works and the characters of their creators and considering that the fashion industry has spread to a wide area of specialization, clothing designs are considered as paradigms to demonstrate fashion, other productions such as accessories and home textiles were excluded. The distinction between artistic and experimental design examples, and commercial and professional design activity has been drawn as design exhibitions and slow fashion brands. The selection is based on the design approach and design solutions that address the problems mentioned in the book in a design system. Three design exhibitions in this context belong to fashion academicians; these are “Seamless Clothes” by Sedef Acar, “Un-cut Clothes” by Yuksel Sahin and “Waste free Clothes” by Solen Kipoz. On the other hand, in the selection of slow fashion brands, we can talk about a very young and new formation with the exception of two or three examples. These brands adopt a boutique production model with a limited number of production and works in collaboration with a few experts in workshop environment, which has not engaged in any corporate promotional activity for communication or could not enter for economic reasons. They also have a special aesthetic taste and a sensitive ethical approach and creates a small economy compared to the dominant luxury and apparel industry. These brands are respectively; *Selçuki&Ali*, created by Selçuk Gürışık and Ali Alev by interpreting the felt craft with wearable artistic aesthetics; Gönül Paksoy, which interprets the upcycling technique with the collage aesthetics of fabrics that have historical value; *INCOMPLIT*, founded by Öykü Özgencil, which creates wearable examples of participatory and collaborative design, often producing together with disadvantaged children’s communities; *Mandalinarossa*, a solidarist design brand that inspires the use of do-it-yourself model, the result of Nazlı Çetiner Serinkaya’s journey which started with hand-knitted sweaters and continued with multi-functional clothes for children; *Reflect* founded by Edipcan Yıldız, Ece Altunmaral and Eray Erdoğan, which tells stories about social and global issues through designs, by being attentive to the transparency of production processes; *Sat-su-ma*, developed by Özge Horasan which fashions the vegetable dyed clothes with a simple aesthetic; *Argande*, a non-profit social responsibility brand supported by the United Nations Social Impact Fund, launched

under the design directorship of the designer Hatice Gökçe; and *Zero Design* by Gülin Ölçer, which adopts the circular economy model as a design principle and provides waste management consultancy to companies.

Civil and independent activist platforms and collectives, which inform individuals and designers about sustainable production, consumption and communication models beyond design and production activities and which also urges solidarity, have an instrumental role in the formation and development of a sustainable and possible slow fashion culture. I also shared in this book such formations that are connected to a part of the international network in Turkey: there are respectively Clothing Swap, established by Nazlı Ödevci, which organizes free swap renewal markets and exchange events; CURCUIT Istanbul, organized by Ülkü Çağlayan, organizes collective art and cultural events for Sustainable Living; Turkey branch of international platform Fashion Revolution coordinated by Eda Çakmak, which was founded in order to raise awareness for environmental ethics and social problems and to call for action in fashion industry; Clean Clothes Campaign Turkey which is coordinated by Abdulhalim Demir (Bego), which focuses on improving the working conditions of workers in the fashion industry; and Sustainable Fashion Platform, which is a very new formation, encompassing the founders of almost all the slow fashion brands above.

In addition, I believe that the illustrations created by the designer and academician Kardelen Aysel by reading all the chapters and working in collaboration with me will enrich the texts visually as well as transform the reading action into a pleasant and ironic experience. I would like to thank all the authors, designers, brand owners and founders and members of the civil and independent communities who contributed to the formation of this book, the editors and the creative team of Dixi Books Publishing that I feel to be a part of. I am also grateful to Alison Gwilt, professor of ethical fashion studies, for her valuable contribution to the book with the preface. I hope “Slowness in Fashion” reaches different readers, whether they are interested in fashion or not; and I hope that it prompts and multiplies responsible, responsive and creative thinking and spreads the seeds of thought, which is the first step in changing, transforming and improving things.





Figure 1. Slowtopia (e.n.). Design and Illustration: Kardelen Aysel



# Rethinking Slowtopia

Alastair Fuad-Luke

## **Opening threads**

Slow and slowness were buzzwords in the early 2000s, possibly a symptom of an early millennium optimism that we could envisage different kinds of slower, more sustainable and rewarding kinds of living, production and consumption. Since then, the expansion of the internet, mobile telephony and online shopping has revolutionized people's consumption habits, further distanced consumers from the realities of production and enabled global economic growth. While Slow Food and Slow Cities (Citta Slow) have expanded their global reach, other initiatives of the slow movement, such as slow fashion and textiles remain active but diffuse. It is timely, therefore, to rethink Slowtopia in the age of instantaneity. As a foil to rethinking Slowtopia, this text examines some philosophical concepts, the potential of alternative economic models, our notions of diversity and the hidden potential therein.

## **The utopias of slowness**

Utopian rhetoric is a feature of many social, cultural and political movements. More kindly phrased, such movements have a dream envisioning better worlds through creating a new social imaginary. Such is the (pluralistic) vision of the slow movement best known through the activities of Slow Food and Slow Cities. Key values supporting the vision include authentic, local, fair and ecologically conscious production and consumption, respect for encultured and embedded knowledge and taking a long-term rather than short-term view. This requires a commitment to the integration of social networks and the agency of collective action locally by valuing the genius loci, by caring for place. In this sense, the slow movement is aiming for utopias, ideal places of well-being. This rationale works well for locally produced food,

maintaining the cultural heritage of small towns or cities, or local experiences described as slow travel, where the supply chain is short or it involves face-to-face exchanges. However, it becomes more problematic when we consider examples of slow design, such as slow fashion, where producer and consumer do not necessarily share the same place and where recalcitrant mainstream producer industries dominate the marketplace. Furthermore, the challenges facing the slow movement and slow design have undergone some seismic shifts in the last decade with the rapid global spread of mobile phone ownership and connection to the internet. As more of the underconsumers join the overconsumers by aspiring to their resource intensive Western/Northern lifestyles (Fuad-Luke, 2009) amplified by the reach of the internet, the juggernaut of neoliberal global capitalism accelerates. This acceleration is underlain with instantaneity identified by postmodern sociologist and philosopher Zygmunt Bauman as a key feature of liquid modernity, "the growing conviction that change is the only permanence and uncertainty the only certainty" (Bauman, 2000: p.8). Perhaps the notion of slowed up or ecological time that Anne Cline, a professor of architecture, called "nourishing rituals of delay" (Cline, 1998) simply cannot compete with the reality of always on, connected and stimulated. How has Slowtopia responded to these dramatic socio-technical changes?

### **Reflecting on Slowtopia**

The slow movement began in the 1980s as a response to the internationalization of "fast food" global brands. Activist journalist Carlo Petrini's objection to a McDonalds restaurant in Rome set off a chain of events that led to the formation of Slow Food in 1989, still seen as emblematic of the slow movement itself. Slow Food's strategic impulse has been to focus the relationship between tradition and care of people and place. It is clearly an appealing story as the organization is represented in over 160 countries worldwide through 1,500 convivial or local chapters. Food must be good, clean and fair; its production contests large-scale intensive agricultural production through emphasizing appropriate small-scale farming and food production in social, environmental and economic terms; it is centred on the local as community and natural place; and time and passion are invested

in a slow approach to gaining food quality (Tencati and Zsolnai, 2012). Slow Food also protects and nurtures encultured and embedded knowledge as valued means of production. This too seems to be the spirit of the Slow Cities charter with a focus on the production and consumption of local food, promoting local distinctiveness through commitment to conservation of the built environment, recognition of seasonality, traditional rhythms of community life and commitments to ISO9000 and ISO14000 focusing on environmentally managed production (Knox, 2005). While Slow Cities remains predominantly an Italian movement with 87 cities affiliated, and with strong representation in Western Europe, presently 236 cities are members globally. Both Slow Food and Slow Cities are pivotal in keeping the slow movement in the public eye. Both organisations promote their brands through conventional web and social media tools.

The situation is somewhat different when we turn to other domains of positive slowness. Slow fashion is driven by loose networks of independent freelance designers and collectives, fashion design researchers and fashion writers. It articulates a broad set of values around fiber and clothes production that shorten, and/or make transparent, clean and fair supply chains, that encourage producers to cooperate, that maintain local knowledge, skills and traditions, and that encourage extending the lifespan of clothing and/or encourage end-of-life reuse (see, for example, Clark, 2008; Fletcher and Grose, 2012; Kipoz, 2013). Slow fashion lacks a key international organization or organizational structures to gather around like Slow Food or Slow Cities, it is therefore a diffuse part of the slow movement with a difficulty to grasp identity or brand for producers and consumers alike. Furthermore, it is constantly plagued by a genuine conundrum affecting the mainstream fashion market - is it affordable, is it a ploy for market differentiation, etc.?<sup>1</sup>

Similarly, slow design has struggled to gain a genuine global dialogue remaining largely confined within the subfield of design research where most case studies are found – see for example, Local Wisdom (Fletcher, 2009-2018), the application of slow design principles to consumer products (Grosse-Hering et al, 2013), or the activities of the Slow Research Lab (Rais & Strauss,

2016). The Slow Research Lab focuses on slow design thinking as a way of exploring relationships within the self, with the collective, and with other-than-humans as a means to achieve a deeper philosophical and ecological understanding of the world. The speculative and fabulative practices discussed, originating from arts, design and hybrid epistemologies, can inspire individual creative practitioners and researchers, yet one wonders if, and how, these articulations reach a wider audience.

### **Slowness in our liquid modernity**

Since slow design was first conceptualised fifteen years ago (Fuad-Luke, 2002) over half of humanity has been connected to the internet. Internet usage has risen from an average of 10 users per 100 inhabitants in 2002, to 23 by 2008 and 48 by 2017 – averaging 81 in so-called “developed countries” and 41 in “developing countries” (Ogden and Scarborough, 2017).<sup>2</sup> The hegemonic condition for half of humanity is liquid modernity (Bauman, 2000), bombarded by rapidly changing “images of thought” (Hroch, 2016). People may be simultaneously enlightened, educated, inspired, manipulated, seduced, pacified, numbed or marginalised. Who controls the content and flow of realities via the internet has considerable impact on aesthetical life experience where real and virtual worlds are seamless. In 2000 Will Murray, a brand strategist, projected this as the “intelligence economy” where the boundaries between natural and artificial intelligence are blurred (Murray, 2000). Perhaps we are still able to press the pause button on this possible dystopian future but there are some warning signs we should note. The technological capabilities being used by those wishing to manipulate our images of thought was recently demonstrated in a study of the spread of fake news and its ability to be amplified across media systems (Cadwalladr, 2016). Here openness, freedoms, rights and responsibilities tussle with a world of Black Transparency (MetaHaven, 2015) where accurate representation and truthfulness are relative, shifting, unpredictable, manipulated or absent. How in these contingent realities can Slowtopia be manifest?

### **Challenging Slowtopia through philosophical concepts**

The main adversary of the slow movement can be clearly identified