



KNITTING; HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT.

History of knitting and how it impacts
the fashion industry.
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Knitting, history and develop.

History

Since very long-time, knitting yarns has been a different technique to create fabrics or textiles, unlike weaving, the process of knitting is using two or more needles and interconnecting them by a series of loops, it could be done by hand or machine. According to the exact date of when knitting was created or discovered is unknown, knit is a very old technique which has been practiced for like thousands of years, and also for ancients writers they described knitting as a type of weaving, however some historians said that it could be developed or first practiced in the Roman Egypt.

The word “knitting” it came from the Dutch word “knutten” which in old Saxon English *cnyttan* it means “to knot”, or better explained by Chamberlain, “meaning the making of a fabric from threads by hand” (1919) and according to historians, humans would use this technique to protect them against weather, in the 14th century, they knitted textiles to use by fishermen to make warm, woolen, waterproof jumpers for trips to sea.

Origin of the Machine

The stocking frame or mechanical knitting machine was invented in the year A.D. 1589 by William Lee, a poor English clergyman, who to get rid of her poorness he decided to invent a machine that would knit much faster and easier than hand-knitting it (see fig. 1). So, he along with locals' craftsmen he created a machine (see fig. 2), that would work by manual power, to produce a knitted fabric. However, some historians do not agree that the main reason of creating the machine was because of his poorness, although, his invention was the considered the most perfect primary inventions, because it made much easier to knit a piece of fabric, in addition that a hand-knitted one takes a long time to finish it. Until today his machine is still a complicated machine due to its large number of mechanisms. However, by the time was passing, the machine itself was improving.

Impact in the fashion industry

During World War I, women, men and kids were knitting clothing at a large quantity and they were called as a community of knitters according to Samantha Elliot (2015), supplementing the troop's uniforms with socks, hats, scarves, sweaters, mufflers, and balaclavas. Later on, knitting increased its popularity by the 1920s specially by the western part of the world, impacting the fashion industry, on those days knitwear were not only for fishermen or for soldiers, civils were wearing knitwear, especially sweaters/pullovers became essential part of the new fashions of the age for men, women and children. Coco Chanel, the famous high-end French fashion designer also embrace the use of knitwear. However, due to the economy's fall specifically in the United States, the industry of knitwear was affected, for example, when the great depression came. Lately, when the 1990s hit and until today, in the 21st century, knitwear is getting more more

attention and popularity among consumers and fashionistas, and of course the industry itself, and plus knitwear became more associated with "smart casual" wear.

Thanks to technological advances such as computerized knitting machines saw new designs and approaches to knitting, in addition there were quicker, and they make the finish finest. Imagine how fast the knitting machine was developed to make a garment, better looking and faster, that was a positive impact in the development of the machine. Some artists began to see knitting as a legitimate art form rather than a craft or cottage industry, and more attention was placed on the design possibilities of knitting from an artistic perspective rather than just fashionable or practical approaches. According to Jenny Udale "these machines could also produce whole garments in the three dimensions without any seams, producing both the textile pattern and the shape of the item without any additional sewing or finishing techniques" (2014). These advanced techniques are commonly implemented in today's new products, for example, the knitted uppers Nike Flyknit running shoes (see fig. 3).

In addition, knitwear for the contemporary years, environmental sustainability is a new feature, in which the production of knitwear by the machine in comparison with a woven-fabric, it results in less waste, helping the environment with less pollution, and of course for nowadays, people care more about the environment, and also, we know knitwear can be recycled, it can be unraveled and re-knitted and make a totally new piece of garment. On the other hand, it must be mentioned that a new piece of textile was created by Xiao Li, a graduated from Royal College of Art, who created a silicone garment that you can molded as a knitwear, (see fig. 4).

Knitwear along with the knitting technique is improving with the advances of technologies also with the designers' creativity, they are always looking forward to perfect the style, the garment and finding new ways to impact consumers and their necessities, even though

hand-knitting now is cataloged as a leisure time activity, it's a really ancient method that we need to keep it in our knowledge, most of our grandmas used to knit a lot of garments, hats, socks for us and now I bet not so many people know about it. However, definitely we all love a cozy and comfy sweater for a cold winter.

Images



Fig. 1 Hand knitting, by Chamberlain



Fig. 2 Origin of stocking frame, by Chamberlain



Fig. 3 Nike Flyknit running shoes, technological innovation designed by Brooke Roberts and Kylee Davis.



Fig. 5 Xiao Li's new creation, knitwear molded with silicone textile.

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