MUO-E0105 RESEARCH AND INSPIRE 6 CR

WELCOME!

25.10.2022 | heidi.paavilainen@aalto.fi

A" Aalto University
School of Arts, Design
and Architecture

Today

First: Lecture (13:15-14)

Then: Introduction to the course and assignment (14:15-15)

Le Comte de Vaudreuil by Francois Hubert Drouais

Who's talking?

University lecturer, Dr Heidi Paavilainen
MA teaching:
Thesis Plan Orientation
Research & Inspire
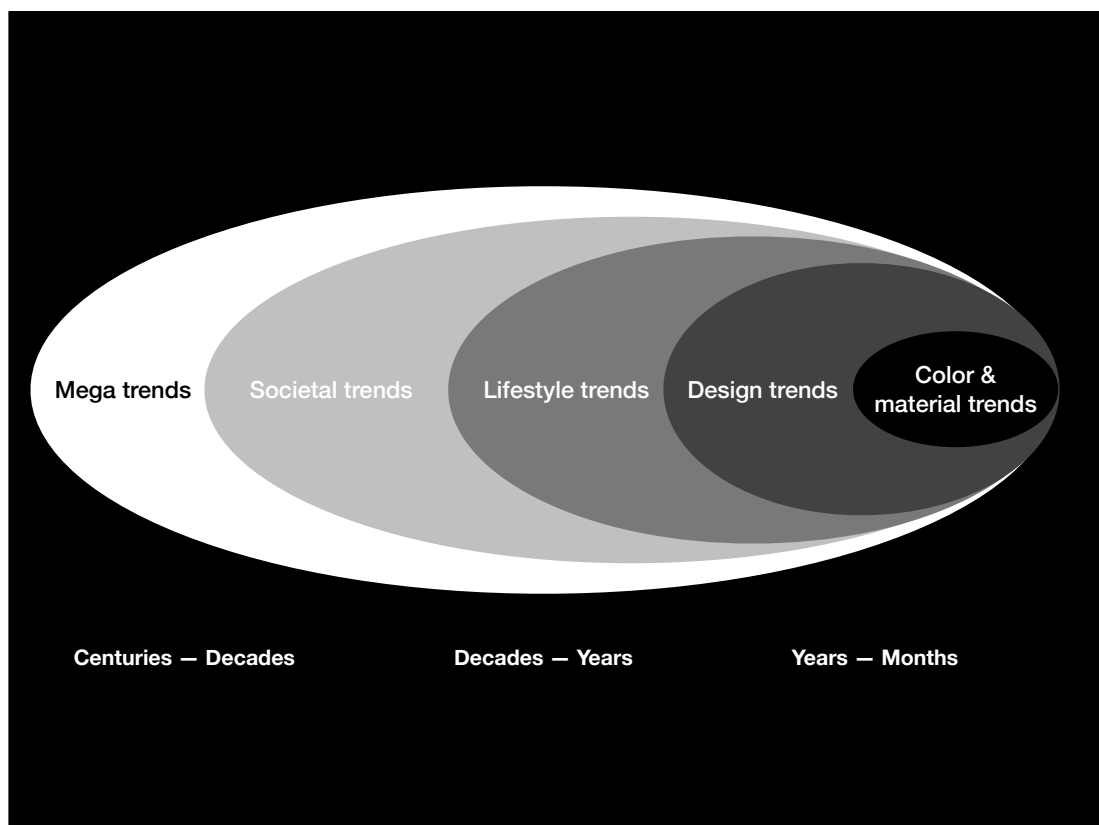Interest: How designs get shared and domesticated

RESEARCH AND INSPIRE

= to find out how the thing you are interested in has changed

= to encourage beneficial change

SHORT-TERM, CONTINUOUS CHANGE: CONSUMPTION FASHIONS

SHINE AND BLEND ARGUMENT

- As a social phenomenon, fashion has been explained perhaps most famously by **Georg Simmel** (1858-1918), a Berlin-based sociologist interested in money, urban living, and social interaction.

- Fashions change because consumers want to at the same time **belong** (conform) and **differentiate** (deviate). We want to be part of a group and be appreciated for our unique style.

TRICKLE-DOWN

Simmel saw the mechanism which is now called "trickle-down".

Upper classes want to separate themselves from lower classes by modifying what they consume: something that lower classes don't and can't.

But social aspirations make lower classes want to appear higher in the social hierarchy, which they do by imitating higher class consumption.

This drives the upper classes to seek new ways and objects to consume. Fashions trickle down through society's hierarchy.

TRICKLE-UP & -ACROSS

Today fashion researchers think the picture is more complex: fashions trickle also across (within the same social class) and upwards (from the low end to the high end). In fact, trickle-up has been dominating the fashion industry since 1960s.

ZEITGEIST ARGUMENT

- American sociologist **Herbert Blumer** (1900-1987) did field research in Paris fashion weeks in the 1960s. He made previously unnoticed observations about human ways of being social:

- In-buyers (a highly competitive group of people who don't know what others are buying) were buying the same few designs out of hundreds of similar-looking designs.

SELECTION PROCESS

- Designers make some designs out of several sketches - Head of the fashion house makes selections - Houses display similar-looking collections in catwalk - In-buyers select the same few designs to be sold in the store - Consumers buy the same few hits of the season.

- At each level, without knowing what others are doing, individuals are selecting the few same items.

PRODUCERS

- Blumer puts forward two explanations for his findings:

- People in women's fashion **production** share an **intense interest** in woman's clothing. These people do almost nothing else. They are well informed of the industry's history and present and that's why designers and fashion houses produce collections that express similar kinds of aesthetic ideas.

Photo: Eric Parker

CONSUMERS

- The fashion business works the way it does precisely because **consumers** do not adopt everything that is introduced as the next fashion. Consumers are **highly selective** in what they adopt, but they, too, favour the same aesthetics. Blumer calls it **collective taste**.

FASHION EVERYWHERE

- Fashion mechanism is not restricted to the business of women's high-end fashion. As a mass of consumers, we tend to love, despise and ignore similar kinds of ideas, topics, forms, colours, and designs. At any given time, certain topics get funded, some colours sell, some places draw people and just some products break selling records.
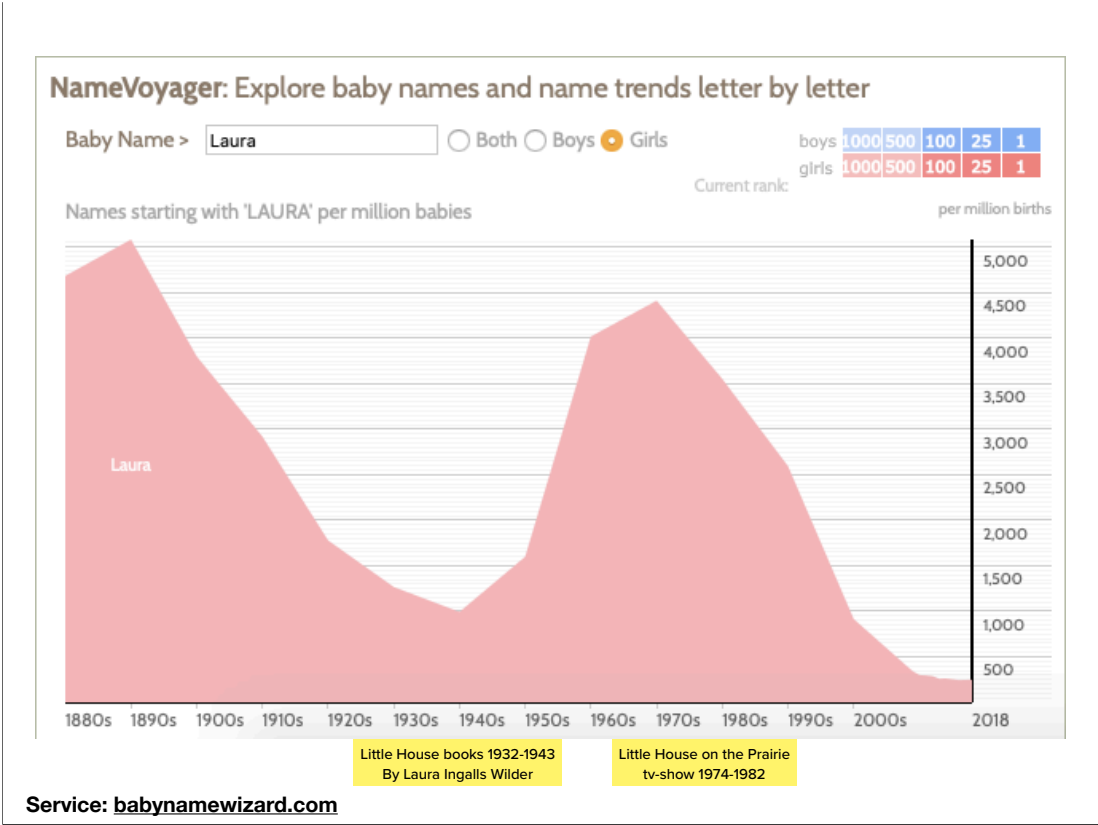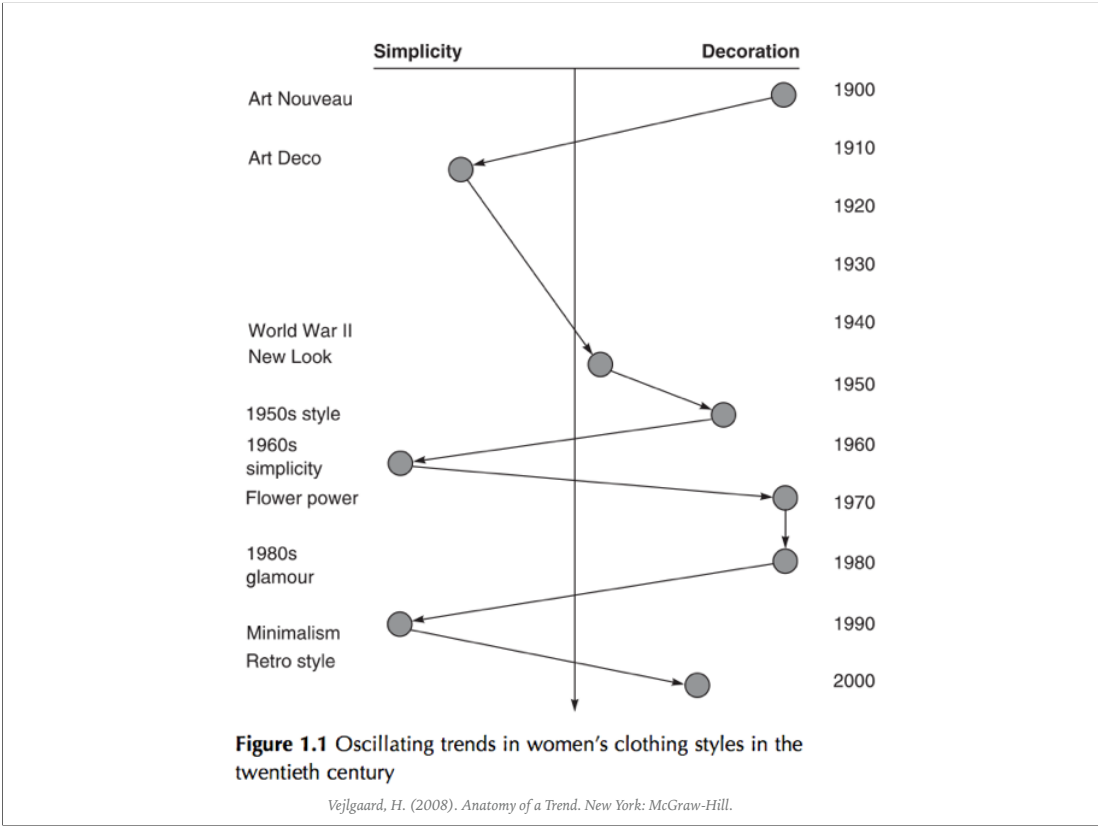
FASHION ORGANISES

- For Blumer, fashion is an important organiser of modern social life. Through fashions, people try to adapt with a fast-moving, progressive world.

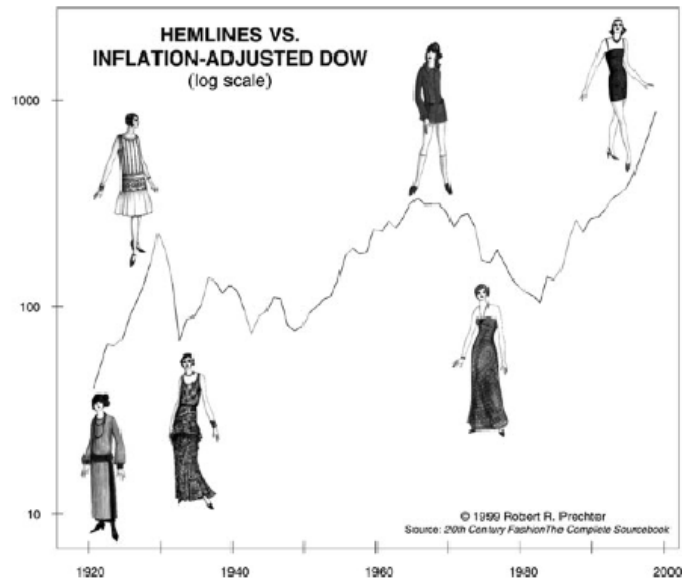- Fashion mechanism is a product of industrialised society.

ZEITGEIST

- Blumer proposes that the bestselling items, the fashions, are the ones which (or who) best reflect *zeitgeist* (spirit of the time), the essence of the present moment.

Figure 1.1 Oscillating trends in women's clothing styles in the twentieth century

Vejlgaard, H. (2008). Anatomy of a Trend. New York: McGraw-Hill.

NameVoyager: Explore baby names and name trends letter by letter

Baby Name > Laura ○ Both ○ Boys ● Girls

boys 1000 500 100 25 1
girls 1000 500 100 25 1
Current rank

Names starting with 'LAURA' per million babies

per million births

Little House books 1932-1943
By Laura Ingalls Wilder

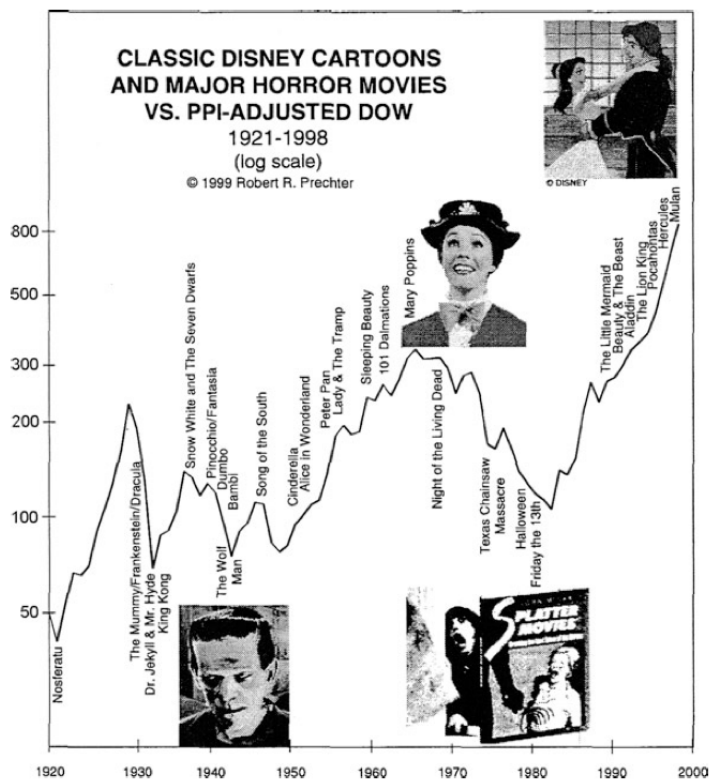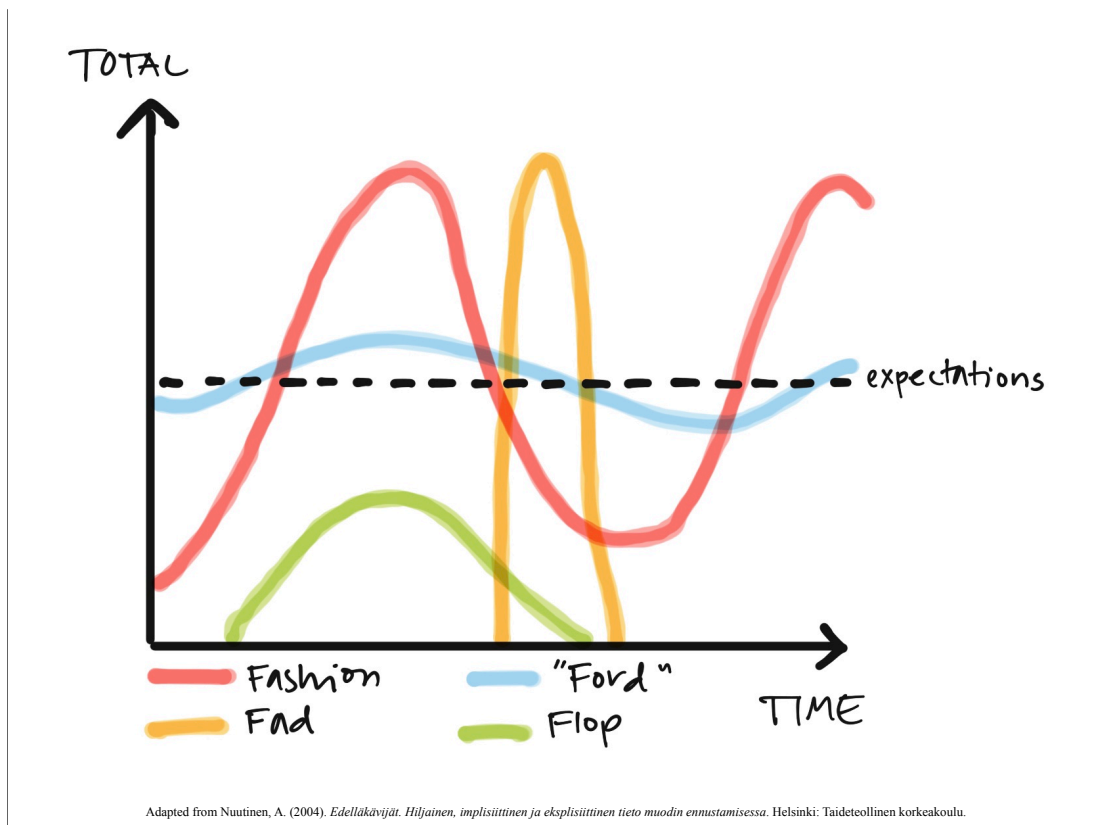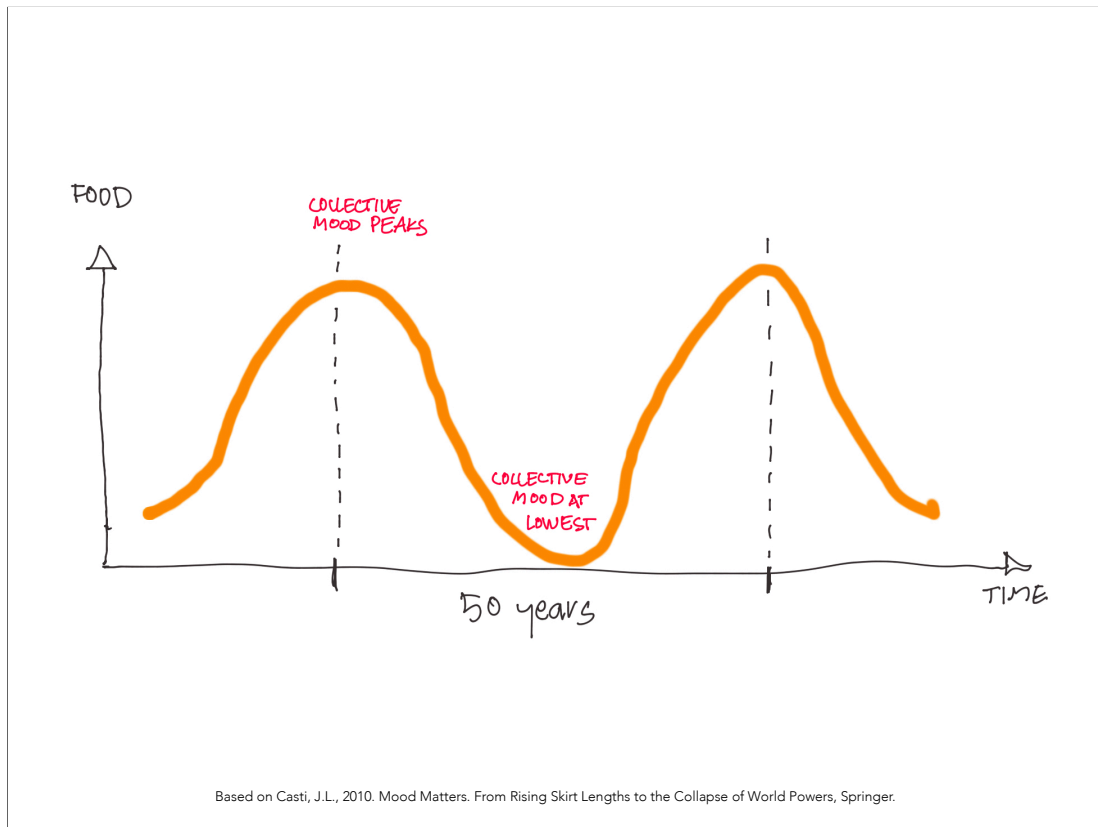Little House on the Prairie
tv-show 1974-1982

Figure 3.1 The skirt length indicator, 1920–2000.

Casti, J.L., 2010. Mood Matters. From Rising Skirt Lengths to the Collapse of World Powers, Springer.

Casti, J.L., 2010. Mood Matters. From Rising Skirt Lengths to the Collapse of World Powers, Springer.

FOOD

COLLECTIVE MOOD PEAKS

COLLECTIVE MOOD AT LOWEST

50 years

TIME

Based on Casti, J.L., 2010. Mood Matters. From Rising Skirt Lengths to the Collapse of World Powers, Springer.

TOTAL

expectations

Fashion   "Ford"
Fad   Flop

TIME

Adapted from Nuutinen, A. (2004). *Edelläkävijät. Hiljainen, implisiittinen ja eksplisiittinen tieto muodin ennustamisessa*. Helsinki: Taideteollinen korkeakoulu.

Traditional methods to come up with trend insights

Selective
CONSUMER + Selective
COLLECTIVE TASTE + EXPOSURE = Fashions
of selections

THINGS BECOME POPULAR GRADUALLY.
FORECASTERS ARE LOOKING FOR EARLY SIGNS ABOUT
THINGS THAT WILL BECOME POPULAR LATER.
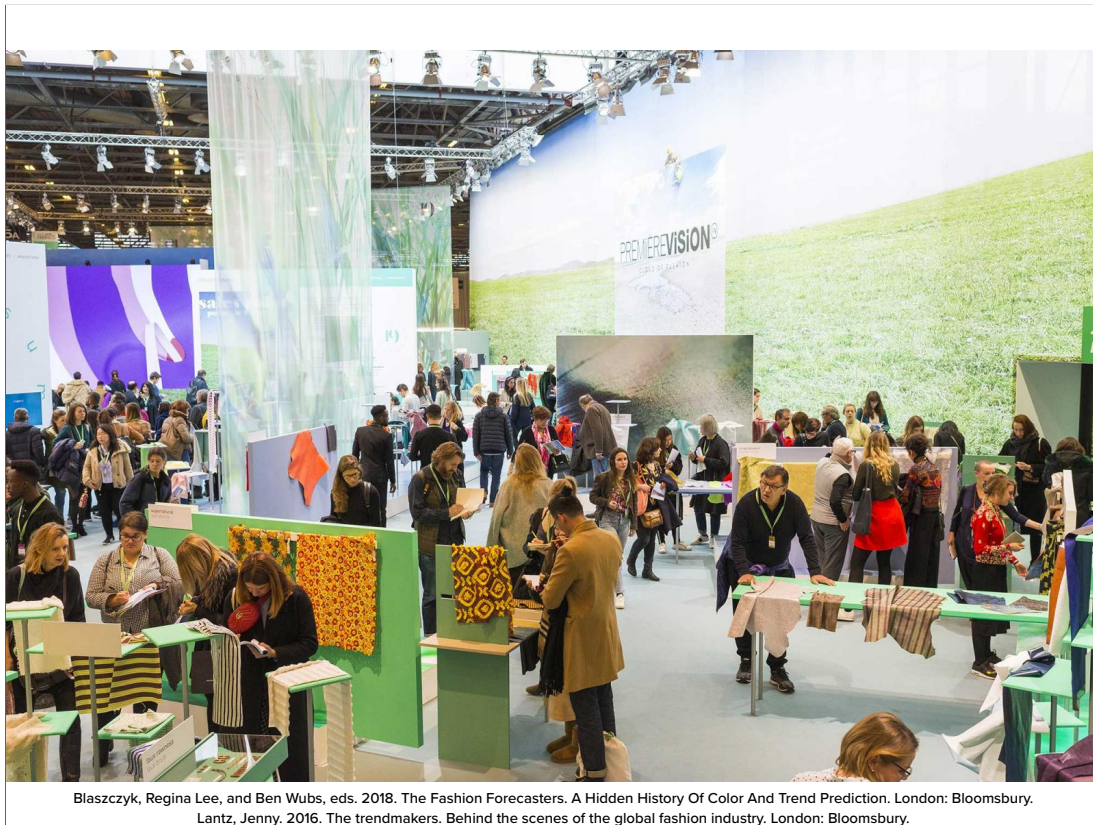THESE EARLY SIGNS ARE CALLED "SIGNALS".

Photo by mauro mora on Unsplash

Raymond, M., 2010. The trend forecaster's handbook, London: Laurence King Publishing.

Blaszczyk, Regina Lee, and Ben Wubs, eds. 2018. The Fashion Forecasters. A Hidden History Of Color And Trend Prediction. London: Bloomsbury.
Lantz, Jenny. 2016. The trendmakers. Behind the scenes of the global fashion industry. London: Bloomsbury.

WGSN trend report database

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Fashion Feed is one
Our global trend spotters have been working 24/7 to identify emerging trends and deliver them straight to you daily.

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Insight   Fashion   Beauty   Lifestyle & Interiors   Instock   Barometer   Advisory

AALTO STUDENTS HAVE ACCESS TO WGSN THROUGH PRIMO. SEARCH "WGSN" AND SELECT THE CORRECT DATABASE.

SO CALLED "FRENCH FORESIGHT":
CARLIN INTERNATIONAL (EST. 1940S, PARIS)
PROMOSTYL (EST. 1966 PARIS)
PECLERS PARIS (EST. 1970, PARIS)
NELLY RODI (EST. 1985, PARIS)
TREND UNION (EST 1986, PARIS), LI EDELKOORT

Blaszczyk, Regina Lee, and Ben Wubs, eds. 2018. The Fashion Forecasters. A Hidden History Of Color And Trend Prediction. London: Bloomsbury.
Lantz, Jenny. 2016. The trendmakers. Behind the scenes of the global fashion industry. London: Bloomsbury.

Fenty Puma   Baja East   Michael Kors   Gucci   No. 21

Tropical flowers in the Spring 2018 collections