

CALL FOR MANUSCRIPTS

Focus Issue of the Clothing & Textiles Research Journal

Sensory Applications and Experiences in Apparel and Textiles

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Guest Editors:

Dr. Young-A Lee, Auburn University, yalee@auburn.edu

Dr. Song-yi Youn, University of Missouri, syoun@missouri.edu

Dr. Jung Eun Lee, Auburn University, jlee@auburn.edu

Sensory perception has become central to human-centered product design and experiential consumption—an especially salient shift in apparel and textiles, where garments and materials are designed to be seen, touched, worn, and continuously experienced (Ha & Goncu-Berk, 2025). Sensory attributes (e.g., visual appearance, tactile properties, thermal regulation, movement, and auditory/interactive elements) shape perceptions of comfort, functionality, aesthetics, accessibility (Entwistle, 2000; Gork, 2023), and overall user experience across contexts (Alexander et al., 2025).

Sensory experience has been widely integrated across various areas of apparel and textile scholarship. Early studies in textile sciences focused on fabric hand, tactile perception, and objective measurement of textile sensory properties. Subsequent research expanded to include thermal comfort, moisture management, and wear comfort evaluation in functional and performance apparel (Bertaux, 2010; Sweeney & Branson, 1990). More recently, this line of research has shifted towards human-centered approaches that integrate sensory considerations to support overall health and well-being. Building on this foundation, recent work has further broadened the scope of sensory research in apparel and textiles by examining multisensory engagement in inclusive design, interactive fashion, and cultural interpretation of textile objects (Goncu-Berk et al., 2020; Gork, 2023; Kabel, 2016). Studies also increasingly explore auditory and sonic dimensions of fashion, tactile accessibility for individuals with visual or sensory impairments, and multisensory approaches in fashion exhibitions and museum contexts (Alsabhi, 2025; Ridgway, 2025; Ha & Goncu-Berk, 2025).

Expanding beyond sensory interactions with digital and tactile products, sensory experiences are also strategically leveraged in physical retail environments to engage consumers. In-store environments integrate a range of sensory cues, ranging from ambient lighting and scent to curated soundscapes to shape consumer perceptions and behaviors (Alexander et al., 2025; Frankel & Ha, 2025; Lyu & Huang, 2024). These developments highlight how apparel and textile objects are experienced not only through traditional sensory attributes such as visual appearance and touch, but also through sound, movement, and embodied interaction.

Beyond physical interactions, digital technologies are expanding how sensory information is communicated and experienced in apparel and textiles. Work on AR/VR and virtual try-on systems shows how digitally simulated stimuli can support mental imagery and telepresence in online and immersive retail contexts (Petit et al., 2019; Kim & Park, 2025; Pandey & Tripathi, 2025). Complementary research streams examine haptic interfaces (e.g., touch-enabled screens and wearable devices such as haptic gloves) and interactive e-textiles that respond dynamically to environmental stimuli, expanding tactile and embodied engagement (Van Kerrebroeck et al., 2017; Liu et al., 2025). Emerging AI approaches have further advanced the translation of sensory attributes into machine-readable formats, enabling more personalized, sensory-responsive digital experiences and tighter integration of physical and digital fashion journeys (Foroudi et al., 2025; Kim & Park, 2025; Swazan, 2026). As sensory research expands across physical and digital contexts, apparel and textile scholarship is increasingly positioned to connect foundational knowledge with emerging applications.

With the growing importance of sensory elements and advancements in technology shaping diverse sensory experiences in apparel and textiles, this Focus Issue seeks to consolidate emerging theoretical perspectives and interdisciplinary insights that advance the understanding of sensory experience and its applications within this domain. By bringing together scholarship from apparel design and product development, textile science and technology, merchandising and retailing, marketing and consumer behavior, as well as emerging areas such as inclusive design and curatorial practice, this Focus Issue aims to foster a more integrated understanding of how sensory interactions shape the perception, use, and meaning of apparel and textile products. This Focus Issue further positions sensory experience as a fundamental dimension of human interaction with apparel and textile products and promotes interdisciplinary dialogue that informs innovation in textile materials, apparel design, and consumer experience. By encouraging engagement across diverse scholarly perspectives, it seeks to identify new opportunities for collaboration and generate synergies that advance sensory research and its applications. We welcome a wide range of topics addressing sensory experiences and applications, including but not limited to:

- **Digital, immersive, and emerging technologies**
 - Communicating sensory attributes in digital environments
 - VR/AR or other simulated sensory experiences in apparel consumption
 - Smart textiles and wearable technologies that enhance sensory interaction
 - Digital and immersive retail contexts (e.g., e-commerce platforms, virtual fitting rooms, metaverse stores)
- **Retail, marketing, and consumer experience**
 - Multisensory retail environments and consumer responses (e.g., music, lighting, scent, visual displays in retail stores)
 - Sensory marketing and consumer behavior (including digital and immersive environments)
 - Consumer psychology in retail and digital environment (e.g., perception, emotion,

- and decision-making processes)
- **Design and product development**
 - Cross-modal sensory integration in communication, design, and product development
 - Sensory accessibility in apparel design and development for diverse users
 - **Embodied interaction, comfort, and well-being**
 - Comfort and functional performance (e.g., sensory evaluation of wear comfort)
 - Sensory-garment interaction and user experience (e.g., auditory/sonic dimensions, emotional responses to clothing materials, movement, kinesthetic perception)
 - Sensory dimensions of health and well-being (e.g., sensory aspects of clothing and their influence on physical and psychological well-being)
 - **Pedagogy and learning**
 - Pedagogical approaches to incorporating students' sensory learning experiences (e.g., VR integration in learning)
 - **Exhibitions, museums, and cultural contexts**
 - Multisensory engagement in fashion exhibitions and museum curation (e.g., soundscapes accompanying garments, tactile replicas of historic textiles)

Types of manuscripts accepted include (1) full research papers (empirical or theoretical) and (2) systematic or critical literature reviews.

Manuscripts submitted to this Focus Issue will undergo double-blind peer review following standard CTRJ procedures. The revision timelines for this issue are more condensed than those of standard submissions. Authors will be allotted 3 months for risky revisions, 2 months for major revisions, 1 month for minor revisions, and 2 weeks for final acceptance with minor edits. Articles will be published OnlineFirst 2-3 weeks after acceptance. Should you have any questions about this Focus Issue, please contact the guest editor(s).

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