

## Liquid Illumination: Fabricating Images of Fashion and Architecture

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**Abstract :** “The appearance does not hide the essence, it reveals it; it is the essence.”—Jean-Paul Sartre, Being and Nothingness Three decades ago, transarchitect Marcos Novak developed an early form of algorithmic animation he called “liquid architecture.” In that project, digitally floating forms morphed seamlessly in cyberspace without claiming to evolve or improve. Change itself was seen as inevitable. And although some imagistic moments certainly stood out, none was hierarchically privileged over another. That project challenged longstanding assumptions about creativity and artistic genius by posing infinite parametric possibilities as inviting alternatives to traditional notions of stability, originality, and evolution. Through ephemeral processes of printing, milling, and projecting, the exhibition “Liquid Illumination” destabilizes the solid foundations of fashion and architecture. The installation is neither worn nor built in the conventional sense, but—like the sensual art forms of fashion and architecture—it is still radically embodied through the logics and techniques of design. Appearances are everything. Surface pattern and color are no longer understood as minor afterthoughts or vapid carriers of dubious content. Here, they become essential but ever-changing aspects of precisely fabricated images. Fourteen silk “colorways” (a term from the fashion industry) are framed selections from ongoing experiments with intricate pattern and complex color configurations. Whether these images are printed on fabric, milled in foam, or illuminated through projection, they explore and celebrate the untapped potentials of the surficial and superficial. Some components of individual prints appear to float in front of others through stereoscopic superimpositions; some figures appear to melt into others due to subtle changes in hue without corresponding changes in value; and some layers appear to vibrate via moiré effects that emerge from unexpected pattern and color combinations. The liturgical atmosphere of Liquid Illumination is intended to acknowledge that, like the simultaneously sacred and superficial qualities of rose windows and illuminated manuscripts, artistic and religious ideologies are also always malleable. The intellectual provocation of this paper pushes the boundaries of current thinking concerning viable applications for fashion print designs and architectural images—challenging traditional boundaries between fine art and design. The opportunistic installation of digital printing, CNC milling, and video projection mapping in a gallery that is normally reserved for fine art exhibitions raises important questions about cultural/commercial display, mass customization, digital reproduction, and the increasing prominence of surface effects (color, texture, pattern, reflection, saturation, etc.) across a range of artistic practices and design disciplines.

**Keywords :** fashion, print design, architecture, projection mapping, image, fabrication

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