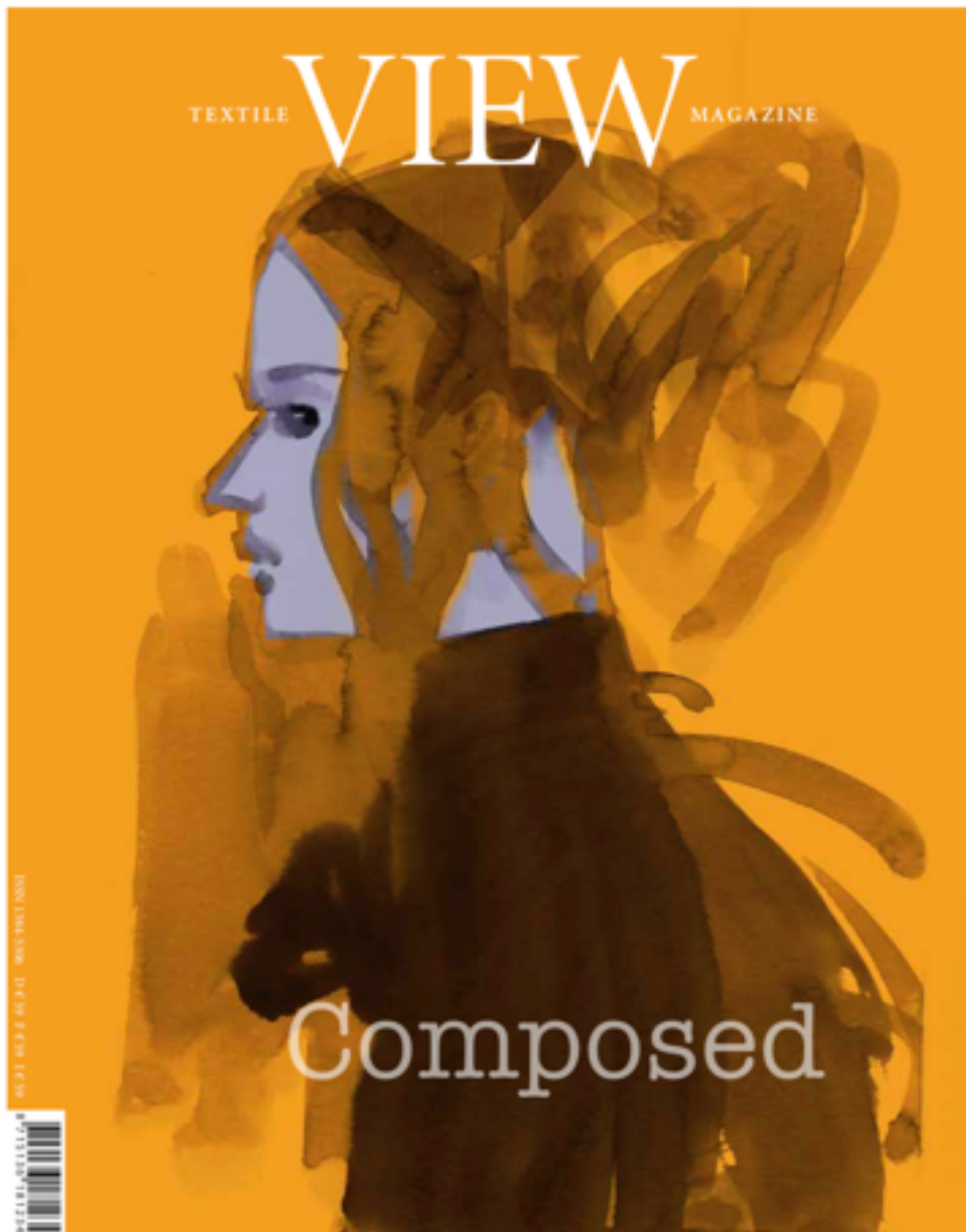


Alessandra Praudi
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Season in review
Spring/summer 2019

Season in focus
Autumn/winter 19-20

Forward view
Spring/summer 2020

Fibres and fabrics

By PHILIPPA WATKINS

Knitwear yarn fair Pitti Filati, a good starting point for colour and designs trends for the A/W 19/20 season, was creative and colourful, with a lively atmosphere, as knitwear remains in fashion. Higher numbers of visitors (+2% 5,500) from around the world, eager to discover latest knitwear yarn trends, gave spinners a boost, and even better news was that Italian buyers were returning (+5%).

A changing world... But Pitti Filati was also about evolution, not just in terms of yarn, but in the mores, customs and principles by which we live, we look and learn. These changes were highlighted in the A/W 19/20 Spazio Ricerca: its theme, titled **WWW**, was surprising and disturbing, looking at how the iGeneration look and see things, examining the link between the real and the virtual. In displays, which mimicked iPhone screens - were the images real or virtual - the viewer is invited to reach through the screen to actually feel the yarn and fabric displayed therein, to discover



WWW Spazio Ricerca



WWW Spazio Ricerca

its tactile. A hybrid vision between the tangible and immaterial, which was well done, and a pertinent comment on how people now see and learn. It was directed by fashion designer Angelo Figas and knitwear expert Nicola Miller.

As part of the new order, **'Sustainability'** is even more the issue on everyone's lips, a focus at every spinner, with many producing reports evaluating their own production, in whatever form. So how is it evolving? Ideas are based on principles of excellence, reduced waste and simplified processes. Natural fibres are at the forefront, as well as fibres with zero environmental impact. This includes salvaging and regeneration of fibres, but also the re-engineering fibres. Markets are increasingly demanding more sustainable fibres, especially wool, where quality standards are raised and raw materials are sourced knowingly. Wools are certified in accordance with their livestock category, the treatments they undergo while being processed, and their dyes.

As to trends at the fair... A/W 19/20 knitwear looks set to be warm executed either in a very light and fine way, with fine

yarns in the finest raw materials often in blends, made with technical brilliance, or done big, but still very light, with air-spun yarns which trap air bulking out the fibre.



Linospin

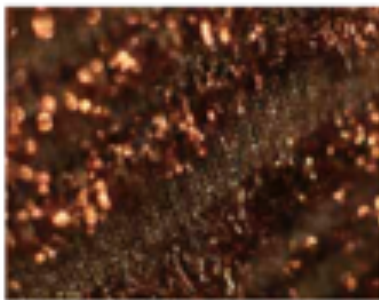
Many spinners are adopting air-spun techniques, the principle of which is that a tube or cage made with fine yarns is filled with fibre without twist, which makes them soft and light and full of air.

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Lanificio Dell'Olivo

With lightness important, luxury fibres are spun even finer. Cashmere and blends of pure cashmere with wool, naturally rich for knitwear, provide luxury and warmth. Lively dyes highlight cashmere fibres. For glamour, natural fibres are mixed with Lurex and little sequins.



Lurex with sequins

Luxurious qualities of baby alpaca feature in many ranges, including melange shades, often very light for gauzy knits, or in bulky twists for heavier gauges. Mohair is soft and light, in mixed shades in harmonious or contrasting combinations. **Opalescent and metallic** effects create a mysterious luxury in chameleon like colours for fairy tale knits, both magical and ethereal, ranging from velvety surfaces, glossy and sensuous. There are more fancy yarns, creating different surfaces, such as velvety or smooth plush, felted and brushed, or shaggy and furry. Chenille yarns are important creating iridescent sheen. There is a wilder, more rustic approach, with soft blends of rare fibres (baby alpaca and yak), sometimes furry or with compact spongy or mossy surfaces.

Hybrids imitate regenerated aspects and furs, soft astrakhan furs in mohair and alpaca, raw styled in surfaces and warm structures.



Millefili - soft and rustic yarns

For the **Athleisure** trend, there are yarns with greater performance, some with a velvety touch, in natural fibres such as merino wool, often also in blends, perhaps with viscose or synthetics. **Performance** properties include total easy care, waterproofing, crease resistance, ultra stretch and compactness, to adapt to the different needs from work to sports and engaging with outdoor activities, in a continuous cycle.

Wools and noble fibres = towards sustainability

With growing demand for natural, sustainable fibres, wool spinners are looking at the traceability of their wool yarn sourcing.

Tellegno 1900, with a long history of skill and knowhow in the production of wool yarns, has a strong focus on the evolving sustainability of its products – focusing also on stories behind traceability. It's classic yarn *Harmony* (extrafine merino) is evolving with improved performance into super performing *Harmony 4.0* with total easy care, water repellence, compact and crease resistant properties, lending itself to sportswear. A key factor is the higher twist, which results in a decrease in pilling. Also in the collection are mixes of wool/silk, linen/cashmere, and performance yarns with a velvety touch made from wool/cashmere.

Botto Giuseppe offers light, airy wool yarns in the finest counts, featuring air jet processing, and wool blends with cashmere. It's *Nanosilo Fibra* collection features fine quality wools sourced selectively from Australia and Asia, and processed in the Cascarni factory in Tarcento where electricity is generated

by water from a waterfall combined with photovoltaic panels. Wools are certified Cradle to Cradle by type of breeding and treatments while processing. And, for a bit of glamour, ultrafine wool and cashmere yarns are discreetly intertwined with Lurex and sequins.

Cashmere specialist **Cariaggi**, believing for many years that sustainability is an essential asset to the company, is investing in more measures to reduce its impact on the environment, cut energy consumption and reduce its carbon footprint. Starting with the study of ancient plant dyeing techniques, Cariaggi has created its *Systema Natura*, a natural and eco-friendly cashmere yarn dyed using a dyeing process made with plant elements through the infusion of berries and roots. And these herb-based recipes create the most beautiful colours on cashmere.



Cariaggi's cashmere 2/28 Gauge natural dye. Photo: Daniel Costa

Dell'Olivo has new interpretations of noble and classic fibres where cashmere, baby alpaca, cotton and extra-fine wool become extremely light, precious fancy yarns. A new feature is a blend of baby kid mohair and alpaca, with absolute softness to the touch, where intertwining of the fibres is a visual and tactile surprise. Cotton is adapted to suit all seasons, refined and surprisingly soft.



Lanificio Dell'Olivo's Alpaca