

WoW Woman in Fashion Tech | Naima Alahyane Rogeon, attorney-at-law and member of the board of the Fashion Tech Association Paris

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Interview by Marija Butkovic (@MarijaButkovic)

After a first experience as an in-house counsel in the selective distribution industry (Yves Saint Laurent Perfumes), Naima Alahyane Rogeon became an attorney-at-law in 1996. After several years of experience as a legal counsel in various corporations (Euro Disney Company, Alain Afflelou Optical Company), Naima joined in 2013 the Alain Bensoussan Selas law firm as Attorney-at-law Head of the Design and Creation Department. Her practice includes drafting, negotiating and auditing license, franchise and distribution agreements as well as helping designers and fashion company at every legal step of the development of their business in a digital environment. Naima is a member of the board of the Fashion Tech Association, she is a member of APRAM (association of trademark and design law practitioners) and GEMODE (fashion study group – Sorbonne University). She teaches internet law at MJM Graphic Design fashion school. Naima provides training for incubators and acts as a mentor during hackathons.



Fashion tech law is a new area of law. There aren't many fashion tech lawyers because these are traditionally quite separate areas of law. How did you get into fashion tech law?

I got into fashion tech law because I've long been passionate about textile and fashion and I realised that fashion law covers only standard legal issues such as Intellectual property, counterfeiting, tax law, distribution law and consumer law. On the contrary the emergence of technology in fashion raises very specific legal issues that are rarely considered and that I find very appealing. Indeed, I noted through discussions with fashion designers and fashion analysts or by attending fashion tech conferences that these legal issues were not addressed.

What does fashion tech mean to you?

To me fashion tech means the interactions between fashion and digital technologies. These interactions are diverse and exist at various stages of the fashion industry: creation, manufacturing, production, distribution, customer relations, and supply chain. The examples are numerous: 3D printing, virtual prototyping, smart textiles and clothing, digital in store, fashion applications, RFID technology, augmented reality, smart mirrors, personalised products, IoT, etc.

Why do you think there is now a new term “fashion tech”?

In my opinion, this new term “fashion tech” has the advantage of covering the various interactions existing between fashion and new technologies. This term has been such a success that it is now also used in French.

What interesting areas of fashion tech law have you advised on and what was the outcome? (The idea is to get a feel of what interesting work you have been a part of and what we can learn from other people's situations without disclosing too much sensitive information. For example, case law or interesting cases that have happened.)

At this early stage, there isn't yet any case law related to fashion tech in France, but the legal issues concern in particular:

- the protection of personal data that could be collected (fashion tech wearable, smart clothing, fashion mobile application, etc.);
- the intellectual property rights of the new fashion technologies;
- customer information on fashion technology;
- specific contracts that could be drafted; etc.

What are your top 5 fashion tech legal tips? (other than to see a lawyer)

In my opinion, it is important to pay attention to:

- legal protection of the fashion tech innovations at early stages;

- confidentiality;
- contractual relationship;
- consumer information;
- personal data protection.

Who are your favourite fashion tech companies, designers, artist and founders?

My favourite fashion tech designers are Anouk Wipprecht and Iris Van Herpen.

Their creations are a good reflection of fashion and new technologies. The technologies are permanently used in an artistic way. The results are highly sophisticated and reflect all the opportunities offered by new technologies.

I also appreciate the Chanel 3D printed couture collection and the Intel Butterfly dress.

What is the fashion tech industry like in Paris? Has there been an increase in the need for fashion tech legal advice and how do you educate people that this is a new industry and they need specialist advice?

In Paris, the fashion tech industry mainly brings together young creators and startups. Fashion tech is a relatively new sector. I've had the opportunity to speak in Fashion Tech conferences and workshops and I've assisted fashion tech designers. My objective is to draw attention to the legal issues raised by new technologies in the fashion industry.

What will be the key trends in the fashion tech industry in the next 5 years and where do you see it heading?

I think we are faced with the emergence of a lasting system. The major challenge for smart clothing designers is to give consumers the confidence they need to acquire and use these connected pieces of clothing without worry. In order to ensure this, the creators of smart clothing will have to adopt a «privacy by design» approach for the protection of personal data at the design stage.

Who are your 3 inspirational women in and fashion tech?

I wouldn't individualise 3 women. All the women in Fashion Tech (designers, fashion analyst, stylists, etc.) that I've talked to, have inspired me in one way or another through their experiences, questions and hopes.

Website: Alain Bensoussan Selas law firm

LinkedIn: [Naima Alahyane Rogeon](#)

This interview was conducted by Marija Butkovic, Digital Marketing and PR strategist, co-founder of Women of Wearables and Kisha Smart Umbrella. She regularly writes and speaks on topics of wearable tech, fashion tech, IoT, entrepreneurship and diversity. Visit marijabutkovic.co.uk or follow Marija on Twitter @MarijaButkovic @Women_Wearables @GetKisha.

 Marija Butkovic

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