

Online conference

Textiles & Masculinities

Saturday 15th June 2024
10.30 - 18.15 (UTC+1 / BST)
Register via [TicketSource](#)

**DESIGN
HISTORY
SOCIETY**

Textiles and Masculinities Online Conference June 15 2024

Convened by Dr Fiona Anderson of Glasgow School of Art, the Design History Society will host an online conference on the theme of Textiles and Masculinities on June 15, 2024. The complex and evolving relationships between masculinities and textiles have been under-represented in histories of design to date. This picture contrasts with the cultural and social importance textiles have in maintaining, contesting and performing masculinities. We are delighted to have a fantastic group of speakers who will share their international research on historical and contemporary textiles in global contexts.

You can register for free via the DHS TicketSource page: <https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/design-history-society>

If you have queries about registering for, or joining this conference, please contact the DHS Senior Administrator, Jenna Allsopp at designhistorysociety@gmail.com

Each session consists of 15 minute presentations, followed by 20 minutes discussion.

PROGRAMME

Saturday June 15, 2024 (all times in UTC+ 1/BST)

1030 Introduction: Fiona Anderson

1035 Session 1: Maintaining, Performing or Contesting Masculinities

Wool, Masculinity and Fletcher Jones's Trousers in Post-war Australia

Lorinda Cramer (Deakin University)

Illuminating the Hi Vis Vest: Gender, Class and Social Invisibility

Jesse Adams Stein, Bettina Frankham, Elizabeth Humphrys (University of Technology, Sydney)

Getting Laid: Carpets, Double Entendres and New Masculinities

Jo Turney (Winchester School of Art, University of Southampton)

1145 Break 15 minutes

1200 Session 2: Textiles, Masculine Ideals and Colonialism

Fearful Feminine Silks: Jesuit Masculinities, Japanese Courtiers and Textiles in the Sixteenth Century

Linda Zampol D'Ortia (Ca' Foscari University of Venice and Australian Catholic University)

Unspooling Oceanic Labour: Fashioning Maritime Masculinity in the Photography Studio

Marina Dawn Wells (New Bedford Whaling Museum)

Mackintosh, Burberry, Solaro: Dressing the British Explorer in the Long Nineteenth Century

Sarah Pickman (Independent Historian)

The White Duck Suit and Hegemonic Masculinity in the Colonial Tropics c1870–1939

Melissa Bellanta (Australian Catholic University)

1320 Lunch

1410 Session 3: Textiles, Colonialism and Decolonialism

Roger Casement's Closet

Joseph McBrinn (Belfast School of Art, Ulster University)

Pardesi the Turban Untied: An Artistic Response to a Graceful Garment and Its Chequered History
Ishan Khosla (The Typecraft Initiative, UPES Dehradun)

The Weave in Our Stance: Intertwined Histories of Textile Waste and Diaspora Voices

Savithri Bartlett (Royal College of Art), Harris Elliott (Artist, Cultural Curator and Creative Leader), Elise Hodson (Royal College of Art)

1515 Break, 15 minutes

1530 Session 4: Textiles and Masculinities: Design, Craft and Production

Weaving to Heal: Questions of Masculinity and Craft Therapy for US WW1 Troops and Veterans

Jennifer Way (University of North Texas)

Silk, Nationalism and Modern Masculinity in the Nanjing Decade (1927–1937)

Brielle Pizzala (Bard Graduate Center, New York)

Weaving Identities: the Reshaping of Masculinity Among Migrant Textile Weavers in Kuthampully

Saumya Pande (design educator and textile revivalist) and Gadha Gopal (textile researcher and fashion designer)

1640 Break, 15 minutes

1655 Session 5 Queer Identities and Textiles

Queering Textiles and Masculinity: on a Latvian Drag King's Re-appropriation of Folk Costume

Elena Mari Wise (Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam)

Lesbians in Levis: Denim as a Queer Female Signifier in '90s and '00s TV

Glenys Johnson (Freelance Fashion Historian and Author)

Canvas: Filippo de Pisis's Workwear and Artworks

Alessandra Vaccari (Università luav di Venezia)

1810 Closing Remarks

1815 Close

Abstracts and Speaker Biographies

Wool, Masculinity and Fletcher Jones's Trousers in Post-war Australia

When Fletcher Jones opened his first Melbourne menswear store in 1946, he sold only one style of trousers. Known as Plus 8s, these trousers had eight extra inches of fabric incorporated at the waistband – an exciting, fashionable prospect as Australians moved from the controls of World War II clothes rationing and style restrictions. What he lacked in variety, Jones made up for by focusing attention on his customers' bodies to achieve the perfect fit – whatever men's size or shape. That Jones paid attention to this in this post-war period recognised a masculine body-consciousness that could be heightened on troops' return from service, and the consequences of clothing that fit, when some men's bodies had changed significantly as a result of war: whether slimmer or more muscular, for those captured as prisoners of war, or who returned to Australia with disabilities. Jones was not only 'fussy on fit', as his specially trained fitters and customers – all of whom were measured in store in person – were aware. Jones also aimed to clothe his customers in trousers made from the best Australian wool. He would continue to do so as synthetics spectacularly entered the menswear market, for decades remaining one of the largest users of Australia wool. Jones would, indeed, become known by the moniker 'Mr Merino' for his preference for wool. This paper sets out to explore the intersections of wool and masculinity in Fletcher Jones' trousers in post-war Australia. It will consider how wool impacted those body-conscious male consumers who were carefully fitted for Plus 8s, or Jones's other styles that followed, and how the connections between wool and masculinity solidified in the 1950s and beyond.

Biography

Lorinda Cramer is a lecturer in Cultural Heritage and Museum Studies at Deakin University. A social, cultural and dress historian, she has research interests in Australian wool – its gendered, worn and material history. She had explored these interests as a National Library of Australia Fellow and Powerhouse Museum Visiting Research Fellow, both for 2023, and as Redmond Barry Fellow for the State Library of Victoria's 2022 Fellowship Program. She has presented and published her work widely in Australia and internationally, including her book *Needlework and Women's Identity in Colonial Australia* (Bloomsbury) in 2020.

Illuminating the Hi Vis Vest: Gender, Class and Social Invisibility

Fluorescent high-visibility workwear ('hi vis') has origins in the invention of *DayGlo* reflective paint in the 1930s, and its use for job site clothing has been traced to British railway workers in the 1960s. Hi vis is now a global phenomenon, but its meanings and uses differ across geographies, as indicated by the *Gilet Jaunes* protests in France, and "safety orange" in the United States (Fisher 2021).

In Australia, hi vis is legally required safety equipment in many industries, particularly in male-dominated sectors such as construction, roadworks, security, mining and transport. But hi vis is about much more than workplace safety; it is a complex and unpredictable cultural signifier. Hi vis garments project layers of meaning — along classed and gendered lines — which are highly dependent upon the wearer and the context. Hi vis can connote safety, authority, working class masculinity, Australian "bogan" culture, productivity and protest (across a broad political spectrum). Furthermore, men in hi vis are often invisible, while women in hi vis are still seen as unusual or outside the norm. This contextual invisibility — and mutable signification — means the 'work' that hi vis does in society, and particularly in workplaces, is not immediately obvious.

This paper is part of a larger, ongoing research project illuminating the political, social, gendered and racialised dimensions of hi vis, past and present, with a focus on both the workwear itself and the voices of its wearers. Our focus in this paper is the relationship between hi vis and constructions of normative working-class Australian masculinity. Here we unpack the gendered 'work' that hi vis does in making these workers both visible and invisible, and explore how wearing hi-vis is rendered both desirable and undesirable. We analyse and draw upon historical sources, alongside mainstream and social media, to (re)illuminate the hi-vis vest.

References:

Fisher, A. W., "Safety Orange," *Journal of Visual Culture* 20, no 1 (2021): 3-24.

Biographies

Dr Jesse Adams Stein, Senior Lecturer and ARC DECRA Fellow at UTS School of Design, is an interdisciplinary design researcher focusing on technology, labour and material culture, from the 1980s to present. Her research explores less popular and hidden sides of design, such as industrial craft, repair, small-scale manufacturing and human labour. Stein is the author of *Hot Metal* (Manchester 2016) and *Industrial Craft in Australia* (Palgrave 2021). With Dr Chantel Carr, Stein was founder and organiser of the interdisciplinary 2023 symposium *All Hands on Deck*, which led to the development of two scholarly book collections (edited with Carr), *Designing through Planetary Breakdown* and *Working through Planetary Breakdown* (both Routledge, due 2025).

Dr Elizabeth Humphrys, Senior Lecturer and Head of Social and Political Sciences in the UTS School of Communication, is a political economist and labour historian interested in the impact of crisis and climate change on workers. Her first book, *How Labour Built Neoliberalism* (Brill/Haymarket 2019), was described in the Sydney Review of Books as a 'tremendously important' contribution to understanding economic change in Australia's recent past. Elizabeth is an Associate of the Centre for Future Work at The Australia Institute, a leading independent public policy think tank, and an Editor of *Social Movement Studies*.

Dr Bettina Frankham, Senior Lecturer Media Arts and Production in the UTS School of Communication, is a practice led researcher in digital media. Her research interests include art and documentary intersections, expanded documentary practice and the impact of digital culture on creative media production. She explores the role of aesthetic experience in knowledge creation and is developing an open, poetic approach to media projects that address issues of social

concern. Bettina is chair of the ASPERA Research sub-Committee and an Editor of the *Sightlines: Filmmaking in the Academy Journal*.

Getting Laid: Carpets, Double Entendres and New Masculinities

'... feminist cultural history has questioned the neglected place of the domestic and the gendering of everyday life in theories of modernity, arguing that exploring things from the point of view of a gendered experience of the domestic problematises many of the narratives through which we have conceptualised both past and contemporary experience' (Hollows, J,& Mosely, R, 2006; 97-8)

In response to the quote (above) and in light of a particularly gendered vision of the home, this paper considers the articulation of masculinity/ies in the domestic environment in 1970s Britain. Its focus is both material and conceptual, ordinary and extraordinary, and aims to establish links between changing gender roles and expectations, consumption practices, and the cultural climate that clung to the whisp of hope that would realise the counterculture narratives of new ways of living and being.

Set within the constructs of the 'tactile home', in which every surface was attuned and available to sensory engagement and pleasure – for example, sofas that 'arms to hold you', televisions that were able to 'see sound and hear colour', and carpets that begged for pile to be explored by naked fingers and toes – the discussion highlights a transformation of the British home as an idea and a place. We might see this as a cultural shift; as an opportunity to foster changing attitudes to the space, its inhabitants and material, specifically textile, objects.

Carpets were very much part of the language of modernity expressed in the concept and design of the tactile home, but much of this was shrouded in an understanding of 'home' emerging from a wider popular culture narrative that was diametrically opposed to it. The domestic sphere – and particularly marriage - was an emasculating, sexually sterile space and the site of much comedy in the 1970s, whilst the 'tactile home' offered the promise of 'sensual pleasure', with oneself, with someone else, or with your things. Most frequently this was articulated through the double entendres that were the mainstay of domestic comedy, as will be discussed here, but were utilised as possibility; the possibility to reinvent one's environment, experience and relationships through consumer goods.

The focus of this paper are the ways in which these changes were considered and alluded to in the articulation of masculinity/ies in print advertisements for Bremworth Carpets appearing in popular interior design magazines in the UK (1971-1973) and aims to establish a relationship between people and their things that are both representational and experiential.

References:

Hollows, J,& Mosely, R, 2006, *Feminism in Popular Culture*, London: Berg; 97-8

Biography

Dr Jo Turney is Professor of Fashion and Textiles at Winchester School of Art, University of Southampton, where she is the Faculty Director of the Graduate School (Arts and Humanities). She is the founding editor of *Clothing Cultures*, an editorial board member of *Textile: the journal of cloth and culture* and has published widely on everyday textiles and dress.

Fearful Feminine Silks: Jesuit Masculinities, Japanese Courtiers and Textiles in the Sixteenth Century

This paper analyses the debate surrounding Jesuit garments in the Catholic mission of Japan through the lens of gender. Using manuscript correspondence from Asia, this paper first analyses how the missionaries described and classified Japanese masculinities according to the textiles Japanese men wore. Then, it establishes how the Jesuits presented their own garments as suitable to the Japanese context, claiming that their cassocks were coherent with the principles of the most proper expression of Japanese masculinity.

The early modern mission in Japan (1549-1620 ca.) was founded by the Catholic male order of the Society of Jesus; in its first decades, it was characterised by attempts to accommodate to local culture while preserving many elements of southern European Catholicism. At the end of the 1560s, Jesuit Francisco Cabral was sent as superior from India, to limit the use of silk (Japanese) garments among his brethren. Keen to persuade them to return to the black cassock, Cabral set out to interview upper-class men and analyse their expressions of manhood. He then subdivided Japanese masculinities into different groups following the types of textiles these men wore. In particular, he used silk as an external, visible indicator to discern which Japanese masculinities were proper, and which were not, according to what he presented to be the Japanese standards. Thanks to a purported commonality between the latter and Jesuit prescriptions on masculinity and male emotions, Cabral was able to pass his dress reform among his brethren, and the cassock as a proper garment for Japan.

Biography

Linda Zampol D'Ortia (PhD, University of Otago 2017) is Marie Skłodowska-Curie Global Fellow at Ca' Foscari University of Venice and at the Australian Catholic University, where she is developing a project on the role of emotional practices in the early modern Jesuit missions in Asia. She has held research fellowships at Ruhr Universität Bochum, the National Library of Australia, and Giorgio Cini Foundation in Venice. Her research interests include Christianity in Japan, early modern Catholic missions, gender history, the history of Asia-Europe contacts, materiality, emotions, and failure studies.

Unspooling Oceanic Labour: Fashioning Maritime Masculinity in the Photography Studio

Fashioning masculinity was of particular concern in New Bedford photography studios of the 1840s and 1850s. Interest in photography's new technology coincided with growing wealth and cosmopolitan audiences arriving in the burgeoning Massachusetts whaling port. Sailors had their portraits taken for loved ones before they went on years-long voyages, sometimes wearing their typical garb of loose shirts and kerchiefs. Additionally, to emphasize the gendered aspects of occupational specificities, some stood in front of maritime backdrops. Rather than blank space, these examples feature ships behind men's shoulders, depicting a sailor's experiential past or future. These backdrops are incredibly difficult to study, but contextual clues and visual analysis assists in understanding their compositions (as potentially cotton sheeting) and artistic attributions (as potentially local painters). Specifically, this paper speculates the artists of New Bedford backdrops were maritime painter Benjamin Russell (1804-1885) and sign painter Caleb Purrington (1812-1876). The two were comfortable painting cloth in ways that emphasized whaling's specific masculine work, since they had created a *Grand Panorama of a Whaling Voyage 'Round the World* in 1848. The panorama was a 1,275-foot long and 8-foot high tempera painting on cotton, that had a special function of spooling so as to be displayed, travelled, and displayed again. This medium would be a similar function for studio backdrops that could be unspooled, displayed, and changed for additional customers. How studios understood sailing masculinity had a great effect on how sailors appeared in photography's newly-accessible portrait forms.

This paper takes into account the social function of textiles as they conveyed specific, contingent ideas about gender identity—about the physical skills and violence they helped reify as inherent to it. This manifested in sartorial style, as well as the mysterious backdrops behind sailor photographs. This paper uses research on daguerreotypes and ambrotypes in the collection of the New Bedford Whaling Museum to argue that photographers and sailors collaborated to construct a particular vision of maritime masculinity that benefitted commercial interests. In keeping with current photography scholarship, it acknowledges that photographs are constructed through social processes, but it asserts that textiles played an important role in that process of literally constructing and fashioning gender.

Biography

Marina Dawn Wells holds a PhD in American & New England Studies from Boston University, and a BA from Colby College in art history and English literature. Marina has been a fellow at such institutions as the Winterthur Museum, Mystic Seaport Museum, and Nantucket Historical Association, and currently works as the New Bedford Whaling Museum's Photography Collection Curatorial Fellow. Marina's academic interests include gender and sexuality, oceanic studies, and nineteenth-century print culture, which influences their current research project, "Making Men from Whales: Whaling Art and Gender in New England, 1814-1861."

Mackintosh, Burberry, Solaro: Dressing the British Explorer in the Long Nineteenth Century

During the nineteenth and early twentieth century, explorers were celebrated figures in Great Britain and the wider Western European and settler world. Overwhelmingly white, male, and able-bodied, these figures were hailed in the popular press and by scientific societies as embodiments of normative masculine values, who braved dangerous environments in the pursuit of knowledge and geographic conquest. But explorers were also typically savvy navigators of media and commercial landscapes, fashioning their own images to appeal to supporters and carefully considering how to equip themselves for their expeditions. Textiles were key tools for both of these tasks.

This talk examines the ways in which British explorers chose, discussed, and used particular textiles in the field, and how textile manufacturers and retailers in turn drew on explorers' exploits to sell their products through advertisements. It will draw on textual and photographic archival material from polar, alpine, and tropical expeditions to focus on three examples: rubberized fabric commonly known as "mackintosh," Burberry gabardine, and Solaro, a wool fabric specifically designed to protect the bodies of white men from tropical climates. All three of these materials were used on myriad expeditions during the long nineteenth century, but explorers gave special consideration to each type, especially weighing the textiles' ability to allow a wearer to engage in strenuous physical activity while moderating perspiration. Analyzing nineteenth-century discourse around these textiles and their use by explorers reveals historical connections not only between materials, industry, and colonial expansion, but also between textiles and predominant Victorian theories of gender, race, and health related to climate, sweat, and exertion. Mackintosh, gabardine, and Solaro helped explorers dress the part for their chosen profession, but also helped spread cultural ideas of how white male bodies should interact with unfamiliar or so-called "extreme" environments.

Biography

Sarah Pickman is an independent historian whose research examines histories of exploration, science, and material culture in the Anglophone world in the long nineteenth century. She earned her Ph.D. in 2023 from the History of Science and Medicine program at Yale University, where her dissertation ("The Right Stuff: Material Culture, Comfort, and the Making of Explorers, 1820-1940") was awarded the Hans Gatzke Prize for an outstanding dissertation in a field of European history. Among other forthcoming work she is the co-editor, with Daniella McCahey, of *Science and Exploration in the Polar Regions: A History in Primary Sources, 1773-1918* (Routledge).

The White Duck Suit and Hegemonic Masculinity in the Colonial Tropics c1870–1939

In tropical colonial settings such as the Netherland East Indies, British India, Singapore and far northern Australia, growing numbers of men of European descent took to wearing white suits between the late nineteenth century and Second World War. The increasing adoption of white-hued menswear made from cotton and linen fabrics (chiefly duck or drill) was influenced by scientific ideas about what apparel would best suit the so-called members of white or European races in the tropics, minimising torpor and disease. The shift toward white dress among European men was also motivated by the desire to clearly demarcate between colonisers and colonised.

In this paper, I show that men's white cotton or linen suits helped to produce a form of hegemonic masculinity specific to the colonial tropics in three key ways. In the first place, there was the symbolic power of the apparel's whiteness; the easy allusive slippage between its white hue, racial whiteness and moral purity. In the second place, there was the intensive labour required to wash, bleach and iron white cotton and linen clothing, and to maintain the stiffness of collars whose starchiness constantly wilted in the humidity. Much of this labour was carried out by Asian houseboys or employees of commercial laundries who worked extraordinarily long hours on low pay. Lastly, most men freshly arrived in the tropics from temperate climates went through the ritual of discarding their old dark wool suits in favour of white lightweight outfits. This ritual marked them out from their counterparts back 'home' as well as from the colonised peoples in their midst, rendering the relationship between hegemonic masculinity, apparel and textiles unusually visible.

Biography

Melissa Bellanta is Associate Professor of Modern History at the Australian Catholic University. As a social and cultural historian, her work explores masculinities, fashion, street culture and popular entertainments in Australia and the Anglophone world. She is the sole chief investigator of the Australian Research Council Discovery Project 'Men's Dress in Twentieth-Century Australia: Masculinity, Fashion, Social Change'. Having co-edited a special issue of *Fashion Theory* with Peter McNeil in 2019, Bellanta has also authored a chapter in the latest Cambridge *Global History of Fashion* co-edited by Christopher Breward, Beverly Lemire and Giorgio Riello.

Roger Casement's Closet

When British imperialist turned Irish revolutionary Roger Casement was arrested on Banna Strand in Co. Kerry in April 1916, following a campaign to shore up German support for an armed uprising in Ireland, there was little evidence linking him to Germany aside from a train ticket from Berlin to the naval port of Wilhelmshaven found in a pocket of his overcoat. As a diplomat and a public figure Casement has been meticulous about his clothes and much comment was made about his appearance during his subsequent trial and execution. Following his investigations into humanitarian crimes in central Africa and subsequently in Peru and Colombia, Casement had published a series of damning reports that would lead to global condemnation of prevailing colonial administrations by exposing their systematic exploitation of the indigenous people and natural resources and the atrocities committed in the manufacturing of rubber for European and North American consumption. Whilst on these expeditions Casement kept secret diaries and took thinly veiled homoerotic photographs but also collected various examples of indigenous crafts. About 60 objects from Africa and 12 from South America survive from his collection including rare examples of textiles. At this time Casement also developed an interest in Irish textiles and was a patron of key Irish workshops such as the Dun Emer Guild and Industries, founded in Dublin in 1902 by Elizabeth and Susan Yeats. Whilst Casement's diaries and photography have attracted much academic and popular interest since his death, his collection of indigenous crafts and his interest in textiles have been universally ignored. This paper reconsiders the importance of textiles as a central tenet in Casement's critique of colonialism in general and imperial masculinity in particular and offers a fresh perspective on the relation of the queer subcultures, in which Casement was immersed, to his humanitarian politics.

Biography

Joseph McBrinn was educated at the University of Glasgow and the National College of Art and Design in Dublin. He is an Irish art historian but he also writes about a broad range of art, craft and design history. He has published widely on the intersecting histories of gender, sexuality and disability in visual and material culture. And he has written extensively on the craft workshops associated with the First and Second World Wars as well as the crafts produced during the Northern Irish Troubles. His most recent book is *Queering the Subversive Stitch: Men and the Culture of Needlework*.

Pardesi the Turban Untied: An Artistic Response to a Graceful Garment and Its Chequered History

A *paag* is an unstitched handmade piece of fabric six yards in length and less than a foot in width handcrafted—handwoven, hand printed (usually with resist dyes or blocks). It not only acts as a protective headgear in battle but is the most essential symbol of masculinity and pride in the subcontinent. Similar to the sari in women—the *paag*—gives a man his identity—his caste, religion, community, and the region a man comes from can all be ascertained from the patterns on the turban, the way it is tied, and from its colours.

Unlike the sari, however, the turban has all but vanished since during the British Raj (rule), men were only allowed to enter the workplace in Western clothing. Furthermore, globalisation has led Western cloth brands to mass-produce garments in so-called Third-World countries—selling them back to the middle classes in the same countries where people aspire to wear mass-market branded clothes. Equally, a huge number of service staff that crowd cities and towns in these regions, aspire to wear knock-offs of the same global brands that are worn by their well-to-do employers.

This paper looks at the textile-based artwork called *Pardesi: The Turban Untied*, which was exhibited at the Devi Art Foundation, as part of Fracture: Indian Textiles, New Conversations. The artwork which is a series of untied Indian turban cloths is a comment on the loss of traditional markers of social identity once visible through the use of specific fabrics and motifs. Ishan Khosla, assembles traditional pattern arrangements of the leheriya stripe, the floral buta, and the architectural jaali, with trademarks of popular brands of Western menswear. Handwoven and hand-block-printed, these logo-based designs take on a deceptively traditional appearance. The turbans remind us of the dissolution of lineal and community identities, the changing perception of masculinity, and the loss of a certain social grace that accompanied the flamboyance and power of traditional Indian menswear.

Biography

Ishan Khosla (b. Fort Kochi, 1976) is a Dehradun-based visual artist, designer, educator, and researcher with an MFA in Design (School of Visual Arts, NYC). He is interested in exploring various facets of the contemporary Indian milieu through design, such as creating new types of anthropological, material, functional, and socio-cultural juxtapositions that combine the handmade craft, digital technology, and design in unusual ways that raise pertinent questions that are relevant in the zeitgeist. Ishan's work uses parody, irony, exaggeration, and other such tropes to highlight this. For instance, the commissioned artwork—*Pardesi: The Turban Untied*, examines the change in men's dress in India from hand-woven and printed turbans and clothing suited to Indian climatic conditions to the cheap mass-produced synthetic garments that use fake brands and have become aspirational amongst the service class.

The Weave in Our Stance: Intertwined Histories of Textile Waste and Diaspora Voices

Textiles are deeply intertwined with the histories and cultures of various diaspora communities around the world. The intricate patterns, techniques, and materials used in textiles often carry significant cultural and historical significance, reflecting the identities and experiences of diaspora populations.

These rich and diverse contributions have often been overlooked or marginalised in mainstream histories of design.

Here, we focus on the work of Harris Elliott (co-author), an international visual artist, designer and curator of Jamaican heritage, whose career has spanned fashion, advertising, and film. He is part of a group that launched the Black Orientated Legacy Development Agency (BOLD), a creative, design development agency working to forge structural and institutional change across the fashion industry and beyond. We examine how he uses textiles and Jamaican Creole (JamC) which has served the Caribbean diaspora as a politically charged communicative code, to narrate a story of defiance, solidarity and resistance. We explore this in two ways: through the personal identity and work of Harris Elliott, how he projects evolving black masculinities through his personal dress and styling for international audiences and secondly through his Le Tings initiative. Here he highlights the dumping of 40,000 tonnes of clothing and textile waste in Accra, Ghana. Together with The Revival and Afrodistrict, community-led sustainable design initiatives, he unravels 'waste colonialism', and brings benefits of skills, knowledge and employment from a dire situation.

In essence, Harris is advocating for profound and meaningful change as Baldwin does in "Fire Next Time" (1963). It involves interrogating ingrained beliefs, biases, and systems of power that perpetuate injustice. True renewal, according to Harris, requires confronting uncomfortable truths and engaging in introspection at both individual and societal levels.

By acknowledging and amplifying dual diaspora and black masculinity voices, we can enrich our understanding of design history and foster greater appreciation for the creativity and resilience of diaspora communities.

Biographies

Harris Elliott is an Artist, Cultural Curator and Creative Leader, whose studio practice uses beauty and counterculture as a metaphor to explore untold stories that exist in the slipstream of popularism. His work traverses the socio-politics of fashion and cultural identities through film, installation, exhibition, design and style. He has co-curated *The Missing Thread* and *Return of the Rudeboy* at Somerset House; two of London's most pivotal exhibitions of the past decade. Harris's international canon includes two decades of Anglo Japanese iterative projects with significant visual and playful conversations exploring the sustainability of African diaspora narratives through the platform *letings.co*. His renowned long-standing collaborations are with Damon Albarn, Gorillaz, Kae Tempest, Erykah Badu and Takeo Kikuchi.

Dr Savithri Bartlett, Senior Tutor (Research), Fashion, Royal College of Art, is a designer-maker, researcher and academic. She began her career in printed textiles at the Edinburgh College of Art, University of Edinburgh and worked extensively with avant garde designers in the East End of London on Autumn/Winter and Spring/Summer seasonal collections. Her experience of extractive and exploitative production methods and employment have begun to shape her research focus at the Royal College of Art. Savithri works entirely with marginalised groups of indigenous and African origin to identify post-colonial systemic inequalities (structures, institutions, policies) which lead to food poverty amongst artisanal and smallholder farming communities.

Dr. Elise Hodson, Senior Tutor, School of Design, Royal College of Art, teaches in the Design Futures programme and is a member of the NEMO project (New Economic Models for the Ocean). Her work combines design history and criticism with cultural theory and political economy to examine the changing role of design in post-industrial contexts and global networks.

Weaving to Heal: Questions of Masculinity and Craft Therapy for US WW1 Troops and Veterans

During and following WW1, US military and private hospitals and other organizations were deploying craft occupations to injured and ill troops and veterans to facilitate their healing. As a type of occupational therapy, the practice of craft occupations involved men making craft objects to divert their attention from their pain, occupy their time, and advance their healing. In the case of weaving, in hospital wards men confined to their beds used looms accommodated to their bodies often limited range of movement. As their health improved, they could work on large looms by sitting or standing, and the US military, medical organizations, and general mass print media published numerous images of men in bed and in workshops weaving. Yet at least one major author of books and articles about occupational therapy—Louis J. Haas, a craftsman and occupational therapist—suggested that male patients considered weaving an effeminizing occupation and that in general, men and women in care institutions required their own facilities in which to pursue craft occupations. Haas even published designs for separate craft making facilities, and some civilian occupational therapy centres already provided segregated male and female craft therapy spaces. In question here are what key discourses of masculinity contributed to Haas and other health care workers and officials referring to weaving not only as effeminizing but also as inauthentic masculine work and, if not weaving, what craft occupations they suggested were appropriate for men. To understand the nature of effeminizing elements of weaving and what craft occupations were considered as constitutive of masculinity, three contexts of the WW1 period are briefly discussed according to how they resonated for wartime and post-war American ideas about masculinity, ableism, and disability: gender and textile manufacturing in the US, weaving, gender, and place at the Bauhaus, and American craft writing about weaving, gender, and ethnicity.

Biography

Jennifer Way is a professor of art history at the University of North Texas where she teaches Craft and Conflict, and American Art and Healing. Her book, *The Politics of Vietnamese Craft: American Diplomacy and Domestication* (2019), explores how Americans appropriated a foreign art form in programs that intersected their diplomatic agendas and domestic lives with South Vietnam on questions of Vietnamese belonging in the Free World, 1955 to 1961. Among her forthcoming publications are an anthology titled *Craft and War*, a monograph titled *Craft, Wellness, and Healing in Contexts of War*, and “The Museum of Modern Art’s Craft-Based Occupational Therapy,” a chapter in the anthology *Modernism, Art, and Therapy*, edited by Tanha Sheehan and Suzanne Hudson.

Silk, Nationalism and Modern Masculinity in the Nanjing Decade (1927–1937)

Among the many possible designs for Jacquard tapestries included within the Qiwen Silk Factory Catalog from 1936 are portraits of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Chiang Kai-Shek, and Mussolini. Tourists to, or residents of, Hangzhou could thereby show their alignment with America by purchasing a portrait of FDR, while the portrait of Mussolini might display an ideological affinity with Fascism. Chiang Kai-Shek's portrait mirrors the profile, uniform, and severe tone of Mussolini's portrait. This catalog and these tapestries are Nationalist propaganda, in alignment with printed media from the CC Clique, a government operated media machine. Masculinity, unity, and strength dominated propaganda and, as this catalog indicates, permeated into the mechanized silk industry during the nationalist Nanjing Decade (1927-1937).

Surviving tapestries from the silk weaving factories are a testament to the active efforts of male politicians and businessmen to modernize and militarize China before the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945). These efforts held two ideas in tension: cosmopolitanism, which drew from European industry and ideology, and "National Spirit," which appropriated dynastic history to signal Chinese strength and unity. The silk industry was male-dominated; male silk hong sources and transported silk cocoons, men wove the complex tapestries, businessmen owned the factories, and male politicians enforced economic and labor policies.

The contrasting treatment of women who reeled silk highlights the preferential treatment of male labor that stems from Confucianism and changes under Nationalism. The men in the government and the silk industry wove this syncretic masculinity into CC Clique propaganda and into photorealistic tapestries.

This paper will expand on my research of silk tapestries as propaganda during Chiang Kai-Shek's regime. For this symposia, I will expand my research by looking at the relationship between masculinity, Confucianism, and Nationalism in late Qing and Republican China by incorporating scholarship from Joan Judge, Jun Lei, and Robert Harrist.

Biography

Brielle Pizzala is a Master's student at Bard Graduate Center. In 2020, she triple majored in Art, Art History, and History at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities. In 2023, she earned her Master's Degree in Art History and Museum Studies Certificate from the University of St. Thomas. Her qualifying paper is "Weaving 'National Spirit': Silk Tapestries in the Nanjing Decade (1927-1937)". She studied Chinese porcelain, intermateriality, and trade in the Early Modern World; her interest in intercultural exchange in the Qing dynasty shifted to focus on the dissemination and acculturation of modernity in Republican China (1912-1949).

Weaving Identities: the Reshaping of Masculinity Among Migrant Textile Weavers in Kuthampully

This paper investigates the intersection of gendered migration and the construction of masculinity within the context of kasavu textile production in Kuthampully, a weaving village in Kerala, India. It explores how the masculinities of migrant male weavers from Tamil Nadu are disrupted, contested, and transformed as they integrate into the social and economic fabric of their new workplace. These highly skilled weavers, known for their expertise in weaving silk using jacquard attachments, have adapted to weaving plain cotton sarees and mundus in the village's 250-year-old handloom industry. Despite possessing identification documents, their lives and contributions remain largely undocumented and unrecognized, highlighting their marginalization within Kerala's handloom sector.

The majority of these migrant weavers are senior craftsmen with failing eyesight who previously wove colored silk in Tamil Nadu. In Kuthampully, they have shifted to weaving unbleached cotton yarn, a strategic move to add longevity to their life as weavers. This research delves into how migration serves as a catalyst for the reshaping of masculinity. As these men navigate new social environments and cultural norms, separated from their familial ties, they are presented with opportunities to question and re-imagine their identities. Through interviews conducted with the weavers, the paper explores the concept of "remasculinization" strategies - the efforts undertaken by these displaced artisans to regain authority, influence, and social standing by adhering to traditional ideals of masculinity.

The analysis further reveals a nuanced interplay between space and self-perception. The quality of space differs significantly between workshop and home environments, resulting in noticeable variations in work patterns and daily routines. This transformative journey challenges dominant notions of masculinity, ultimately highlighting the adaptability and resourcefulness of these migrant weavers in the face of changing circumstances. The research contributes to a deeper understanding of the complex dynamics surrounding contested masculinity in craft-based work. It illuminates the tensions and conflicts that arise from the interplay between the new work environment in the village, the cultural expectations of resident weavers, and the economic pressures associated with weaving the "minimum" warp.

Biographies

Saumya Pande, a design educator and textile revivalist for 25 years, has led and set up fashion departments across several design schools in India. She positions her creative work at the intersection of textile, space and form. Currently on a sabbatical, Saumya is writing a book on undocumented embroidered quilts from eastern India and researching weaving practices of Devang community in the village of Kuthampully in southern India.

Gadha Gopal, a textile researcher and fashion designer, has actively supported Kerala artisans for over four years. She documents their lives and practices, preserving indigenous crafts. As a designer, she built the fashion brand Yuga, promoting Kerala textiles globally. Under ADARG fellowship, guided by Ms. Pande, she researched Devanga weavers in Kuthampully.

Queering Textiles and Masculinity: on a Latvian Drag King's Re-appropriation of Folk Costume

The three Baltic states of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia have lagged behind other European countries in terms of rights and protections for LGBTQIA+ people since their independence from the Soviet Union in 1990 and 1991. In the Baltic states and elsewhere in Eastern Europe, folk crafts, textiles, and costumes are used to define the “pure” traditional culture, one which excludes queer histories and is instrumentalized to advance conservative nationalist politics.

However, in the Baltics “today there is more space for resistance and deviation from social conventions than during any period in the past”. Social and political changes gained through efforts from queer and feminist activists over the past decade have hugely increased the visibility, legal rights, and acceptance of LGBTQIA+ people in the region. Artists and cultural workers in the Baltics have played a key role in imagining and building an aesthetics of queer resistance.

Since 2019, the Baltic Drag King Collective has been organizing numerous drag king shows and events across the region. The Latvian queer-feminist performance artist and co-founder of the Baltic Drag King Collective, Mētra Saberova, often uses Latvian woven belts and other traditional costume elements as part of the costume for her drag king persona, Timmy. By using folk textiles to craft her drag identity, Saberova re-examines, re-appropriates, and re-defines nationalist and heteronormative constructions of Latvian and Baltic masculinity.

This paper examines how Saberova produces a queer Baltic identity by costuming Timmy with folk textiles. By subverting and re-appropriating conservative nationalist symbols such as folk textiles and costume for drag, Saberova queers traditional ideals of masculinity. Her crafted drag king costumes and performances with the Baltic Drag King Collective imagines a new, hopeful future for the LGBTQIA+ community.

Biography

Elena Wise is an emerging curator and researcher based in Amsterdam. She has professional and academic experience in the fields of cultural heritage, art history, museology, ethnographic research and textile design. Most recently, she completed a one-year placement as Curator in Training at the Textile Museum in Tilburg.

In her research, Elena is interested in how artists and heritage institutions engage with traditional craft techniques and cultural memory to address current social issues and imagine alternative futures. She approaches her research and curatorial practice through engagement with intersectional, decolonial, queer, and ecofeminist theories.

Lesbians in Levis: Denim as a Queer Female Signifier in '90s and '00s TV

In this paper, I will examine the history of the blue jean as a democratic and globalised garment, its ability to communicate 'ordinariness' as well as the materiality offered by denim and how this was used to communicate queer female identity through 90s and 00s TV. I will demonstrate how the use of denim as a queer female signifier on TV through this period can reflect how this marginalised identity was negotiated in the mainstream during this critical time of transition.

I will begin by identifying key theories around performance, costume and identity work referencing texts from Judith Butler, Erving Goffman and Arlene Stein. Next, I will examine the history of denim and how it came to be associated with queerness, through both the gay male 'clone' of 1960s California and the 1970s lesbian feminist.

I will then go on to examine the role of television in educating the American public on a range of topics, relevant to understanding LGBTQI+ communities, dissecting British and North American TV programmes from the mid-90s to mid-00s such as *Ellen* (ABC 1994-1998), *The L Word* (Showtime 2004-2009) and *Brookside* (Channel 4 1982-2003).

In the final section, I will look at theories of denim being a gendered or 'unisex' fabric, the materiality of denim and the theories of denim being a 'natural', 'ordinary' and 'freeing' material (Fiske, 1985). I will look at denim through a range of theoretical lenses: its powerful 'ordinariness', democratic reach, materiality linked to 'toughness' and ability to 'protect' the wearer in multiple ways. These topics will be explored with case studies of the aforementioned TV programmes. I will also look to the work of Gabriele Mentges (2000) and Flügel (1930) to acknowledge the material properties of denim and its wide array of complex semiotic meanings associated with the groups above alongside many others.

Biography

Glenys Johnson is a Canadian writer based in London, UK and Malmö, Sweden. Her work focuses on fashion and material culture, including the study of queer style, and costume theory in film and television. She has authored a range of books including *Icons of Style: Diana* and *The Little Book of Vivienne Westwood*. She holds an MA in Culture, Style and Fashion from Nottingham Trent University.

Canvas: Filippo de Pisis's Workwear and Artworks

This contribution focuses on the Italian queer painter, writer and dandy Luigi Filippo Tibertelli (1896–1956), better known as Filippo de Pisis, with the aim to bring to light his long-life interest in canvas apparel. From the one hand, it explores the ways basic textiles were dandified in the context of 1920s men's fashion, as an alternative to its ostentatious luxury. This concern was shared, in the same years and geographical context, by the Italian Futurist artist Thayaht (Ernesto Michahelles), known for having designed the Tuta, a T shaped overall made by cheap canvas. From the other hand, it highlights de Pisis's peculiar, poetic interpretation of canvas apparel.

The presentation stems from my current research work on de Pisis. Combining literary and visual sources, it relies on de Pisis's artworks, photo portraits, autobiographical texts and an unfinished book on elegance and the aesthetics of men's clothing written by de Pisis in the early 1920s, and posthumously published with the title *Adamo o dell'eleganza (Adam or on elegance)*. In this book, he argued that a man could be elegant wearing a cheap 'sackcloth, but with bold and deep tones of colour', 'striped canvases in various colours' and a 'rough blue work cloth'. Particular attention is also paid to the clothes that de Pisis wore to embody the role of the outdoor painter, putting in dialogue garments, colours, and the environment.

In conclusion, de Pisis's conception of 'pictorial elegance' provides a theoretical tool for understanding the modern idea of men's fashion as rooted in the seduction of the things and spaces of everyday life, instead of the rarity of expensive materials and luxury, contributing to change the canon of masculinity in the context of European Modernism.

Biography

Alessandra Vaccari is Associate Professor of history of art at Università Luav di Venezia, where she conducts research and teaching activities in the field of fashion history and theory, and leads the Master in Fashion. Her interdisciplinary research includes modernism in Italy and Europe at the beginning of the 20th century, contemporary fashion cultures and their implications for social change. Alongside she has published articles, essays, and monographs on fashion, temporalities, modernism, fascism and colonialism. Books on fashion from the perspective of designers' discourses and the relationships between Italian fashion and the artistic research of the 20th century. She published "Indossare la trasformazione: moda e modernismo in Italia" (2022) and "Time in Fashion: Industrial, Antilinear and Uchronic Temporalities" (with Caroline Evans, 2020). Since 2019, she has been leading the research Fashion Futuring at Università Luav di Venezia, dedicated to emerging models of fashion design.