

# TEXTILE RESEARCH CENTRE LEIDEN

## ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR 2017



Textile Research Centre  
Hogewoerd 164  
2311 HW Leiden, The Netherlands

[info@trc-leiden.nl](mailto:info@trc-leiden.nl)  
[www.trc-leiden.nl](http://www.trc-leiden.nl)

## The Stichting Textile Research Centre, Leiden

The Stichting ('Foundation') Textile Research Centre was established in 1991 with the stated aim of supporting the academic research of archaeological and anthropological textiles and dress. The most important part of our work is the building up and study of a textile and dress collection. These garments are available for research and exhibition purposes.

### The Board

The board is currently made up of the following:

**Chairman:** Prof. L. Leertouwer

**Treasurer:** Prof. B. ter Haar Romeny

**Secretary:** Dr. K. Innemee

**General board members:** Dr. Sara van Dijk, Mrs. V. Drabbe, Prof. Olaf Kaper, and Dr. G. Vogelsang-Eastwood.

### International Advisory Board

The International Advisory Board includes: Dr. Ruth Barnes (Yale University, USA); Carol Bier (Berkeley, CA); Prof. J. Eicher, (University of Minnesota, USA), Prof. John Fossey (Montreal Museum of Fine Art, Canada); Prof. Michael Hahn (Leeds University, England), Mrs. Layla Pio (Amman, Jordan), Mrs. Widad Kawar (Amman, Jordan) and Dr. John Peter Wild (Manchester, England).

### Staff

Dr. Gillian Vogelsang-Eastwood continues as the director of the *Stichting*. She is a specialist in Middle Eastern textiles and dress. In addition, there is Ms Else van Laere who looks after the financial administration and shop. The volunteers in 2017 include: Shelley Anderson, Anna Beerens, Coen v/d Geest, Olga Ieromina, Jan Knoppers, Maria Linkogle, Tineke Moerkerk, Ms. Rasa Nabutaité, Martine de Nijs, Marieke Roosenboom, Renske Schaafsma, Nan Storm, Riet van de Velde and as a general 'sounding board,' Mr. F. Popp.

The library team is made up of Marieke Roosenboom, with Robbert van Duyn, Sarah Fairman and Karin Winkel. In addition, the TRC worked with students from Leiden University,

including Nelleke Honcoop, Deandra de Looff, Jasmijn Nobelen and Eden Zhang.

In 2017 Tineke Moerkerk and Riet v/d Velde, two long term volunteers, left the TRC. We would like to thank both Tineke and Riet for all their help over the years.

\*

## The TRC as a Cultural Ark

Gillian Vogelsang-Eastwood

Much of 2017 has been spent sorting out, tidying up and getting on with cataloguing and updating items for the TRC Collection. Among the many items are a wonderful series of frames made by the ikat weavers from Kalimantan (Borneo; see below). The frames were made especially for the TRC and illustrate the various stages of setting up, binding and dyeing a set of warp threads ('web') using the ikat (resist, binding) technique before the coloured threads are woven into a piece of cloth.

The design chosen by the weavers for the frames is a stylised boat, symbolising the journey through life - both for me and the TRC.

This symbol led me to think about one of the functions of the TRC, namely as a 'Cultural Ark', a title we were given by the Yemen Ambassador a few years ago when he came to see our Yemeni dress collection, while talking about the current civil war in the country that is causing so much havoc in so many directions.

Basically the TRC Leiden is a 'boat' that is home to examples of different production techniques, textiles, garments, and so forth that are not only stored here, but equally important, these items can be viewed, researched, published and exhibited, so that everyone around the globe can see them (actually or digitally), as well as preserving these objects for the future. The library, lectures and workshops are all part and parcel of the TRC experience and journey to becoming one of the most accessible cultural heritage resources (anywhere).

## Volunteers at the TRC: A personal view

Shelley Anderson

2017 was a fun year to be volunteering at the TRC. We received dozens of boxes of textile swatches from Pepin Press, which involved a lot of processing (sewing identification tags on, assigning a unique number to each object, photographing the object for the TRC's digital on-line catalogue (<https://trc-leiden.nl/collection/>), but it was also interesting to see how designs and patterns changed across the decades. Among the boxes were also some real treasures: cowboy outfits from the USA, and flour sacks. Researching the history of these intriguing objects opened up a new world of textiles for me.

I also learned to darn during a workshop on decorative darning, a new skill that I put to immediate good use. The weekend workshop on lace was also fascinating and a wonderful chance to network with curators and conservators from several European countries. Writing blogs for the TRC website and reviewing books was also enjoyable.

Another highlight was participating in the TRC's second, successful, crowdfunding campaign, this time to support a nomadic Banjara (India) women's embroidery collective. One thing is for sure—there is always something exciting happening at the TRC.

\*\*\*

## The TRC is a Cultural ANBI

In 2013 the TRC was recognized as a cultural ANBI ("Culturele ANBI") – this is potentially important news for any Dutch tax payers. It means that individual gifts can be claimed back for 125% for a private person and 150% for a company. More information is available at the Dutch tax site:

<https://www.belastingdienst.nl/wps/wcm/connect/nl/aftrek-en-kortingen/content/gift-aftrekken>

The status of *Culturele ANBI* means that any donations to the TRC made from January 2013

onwards are tax deductible at the rates given above.

\*

## More space needed!

As you will see below the TRC collection, library and range of activities are growing rapidly and we need to find serious funding to expand all of our facilities, especially the storerooms.

If you know of someone who would be willing to become a TRC patron and help us achieve our full potential as a research and educational centre for textiles and dress, please tell them about us and us about them!

\*

## A TRC publication wins the Dartmouth Medal!

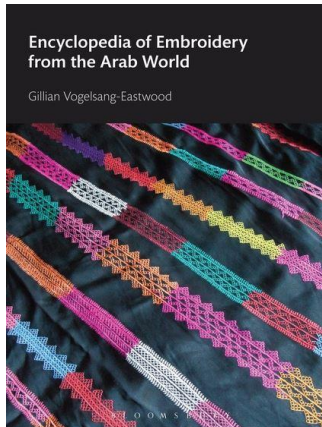


In January 2017, we heard that the TRC's *Encyclopedia of Embroidery from the Arab World* (Bloomsbury, London, 2016) won the prestigious international award, *The Dartmouth Medal*. This award is only given to one, English language reference book per year.

In addition, it was singled out by the The PROSE Awards 2017 as being the Best Single Volume in their Reference/Humanities and Social Sciences section. Accolades indeed for the hard work of all the people who contributed to this publication

This monumental work includes 45 separate articles about the techniques, decorative forms and uses of embroidery from Morocco in the west to Iraq in the east, from the period of Tutankhamun in ancient Egypt to the present day.





The complete manuscript includes photographs of TRC items taken by Joost Kolkman and drawings by Martin Hense.

\*\*\*

## Grants and financial donations in 2017

2017 saw an increase in the number of grants and financial donations given to the TRC. These reflect the growing importance and acceptance of the TRC as an international study centre for textiles and dress. We would like to thank all of the people and institutes that have helped us.

Financial support includes:

### Crowdfunding event



Thanks to the energetic help of Maria Linkogle, the TRC ran our second crowdfunding event in April 2017. The TRC was able to raise €1200 in order to buy a collection of Banjara embroideries from the NGO *Surya's Garden*, a trust founded by Laxmi Naik in southern India (see below). These embroideries were needed for the TRC's new project about embroidery from Central Asia,

Iranian Plateau and the Indian sub-continent. Thanks to the generosity of a group of dedicated embroidery enthusiasts who support the TRC the necessary funding was raised in ONE WEEKEND!

\*

### American Embassy Small Grant Program

Among the items given by Pepin van Rooijen were 34 American feedsacks (see below). The role of feedsacks in helping to clothe the USA from the 1930's to the 1960's is a remarkable story of sustainability and upcycling. This was a totally unknown story to the TRC and thanks to a very generous grant from the American Embassy, The Hague, of €11,700 it has been possible to make a collection and in 2018 to present an exhibition on the theme of feedsacks.



### Central Asian textiles and dress, Leiden University

2017 was named the *Asia Year in Leiden*, with various events celebrating Asian culture and history (see below). It culminated in the opening of the new Asia Library, Leiden University by Queen Maxima. As part of the celebrations the TRC had a two-week event of ikat weaving and dyeing (see below), and an exhibition about Central Asian textiles and dress (see below). The exhibition was made possible thanks to a generous grant of €2,500 from the Asia Initiative, Leiden University.

### Prins Bernhard Cultuurfonds

In 2014, a silk dress and other garments were found in a chest from a shipwreck that dates to c. 1640. In 2016 the dress and other items were put on display in the *Kaap Skil*, in the village of Oudeschild, on Texel. Among the finds were a pair of silk stockings. These have become



the subject of a TRC project. We heard in December 2017 that the Prins Bernhard Cultuurfonds is giving the TRC a very generous grant of of €9,700 to study the silk stockings. Dr. Chrystel Brandenburg and Lies van der Wege (TRC volunteer), are organising a two-year project in order to explore and recreate the silk stockings (see below). These will be on display in an exhibition about knitting at the TRC in 2019.

\*\*\*

## TRC Gallery

The TRC Gallery is used to hold temporary exhibitions about textiles and dress. Visiting these exhibitions is free of charge, in order to attract as wide a range of people as possible.

In 2017 two exhibitions were held at the TRC Gallery, the first was about minority dress in the Middle East to celebrate a PhD thesis by Tineke Rooijakkers (Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam). The second was about textiles and dress from Central Asia and was staged as part of the Asia Year 2017 in Leiden, which culminated in the opening of the Asia Library, Leiden University.

In addition, for two weeks in August 2017 there was an exhibition about ikats from the Indonesian island of Kalimantan (Borneo), which coincided with series of workshops and talks about ikats and Indonesian ikats in particular. Further details about these exhibitions can be found below.

\*

## TRC Shop

The activities of the TRC are also supported by the TRC shop. The shop sells items relating to dress and textiles, including new and second hand books, and particularly objects relating to textile production such as fibres, hand spindles, small items of weaving, and so forth. In addition there are textiles, garments, bags and jewellery from various countries around the world. There is also a growing collection of postcards, based on items in the TRC collection. These postcards are currently only available from the TRC. The shop now also

includes a wide range of beads suitable for embroidery and for Dutch regional dress (*klederdracht*).

\*\*\*

## The TRC's Website

The Stichting has its own website, [www.trc-leiden.nl](http://www.trc-leiden.nl), which was designed by Joost Kolkman (<http://www.joostkolkman.nl>). The site carries a wide range of information about the TRC, including its aims, annual reports, donation information, possibilities to loan objects or to hire complete exhibitions, and short items of current interest. The website information is given in both Dutch and English.

The website is kept up-to-date by Willem Vogelsang who, throughout 2017 has been continually adding new items, removing old items and working on the TRC's big project for 2017, *TRC Needles* (see below).

\*

## TRC and Facebook

Thanks to the dedicated efforts of Shelley Anderson, interest in the TRC on Facebook is growing rapidly and every week brings more and more subscribers to the TRC Facebook page. The site is in Dutch and English and includes news about all the recent developments and events at the TRC, plus some personal comments about items on display or in the TRC collection.

By the end of 2017 there were over 4,000 followers of the TRC Facebook [and by the end of 2018 the number had risen to 6300], which for a relatively small and specialist institute such as the TRC is a considerable achievement!

\*

## Textile Moments

The TRC has its own blog page called *Textile Moments*. This page is used by members of the

TRC or indeed anyone else, who has had a story to tell with regards textiles, clothing, exhibitions, pictures, and so forth. They can send it in and share it with other textile enthusiasts.

Items in 2017 ranged from visits to various countries and cities to see textiles being made and used, to exhibitions in various museums. There were also items about textiles in the news and specific and unusual items to the TRC collection.

\*

### TRC and films

Thanks to the help of Andrew Thompson (RESTORIENT, Leiden), various exhibitions held at the TRC have been recorded in the form of YouTube films. These films can be found via the TRC website or the TRC's Facebook.

\*

The TRC also has a QR code, which links directly to the TRC website:



\*

### The TRC and On-Line Activities

The TRC is very busy at the moment making various parts of the TRC activities, collection and databases available on-line. These include:

**TRC Collection:** work is progressing on bringing the TRC Collection on line, but over 18,500 objects [by the end of 2018 the number had risen to over 23,000] need to be fully catalogued and photographed, and every week people bring in new items for the collection (a luxury problem indeed!). It is taking us a little longer than anticipated, but the database is already proving to be an asset to everyone concerned. It is now being used by students and researchers around the world.

**TRC Library:** Thanks to the hard work of the library team *TRC Library* went on-line to the general public in August 2015. Since then over 3,500 titles are included in the library catalogue, with cross-references, book reviews and recommendations; The library team is made up of Marieke Roosenboom, with Robbert van Duyn, Sarah Fairman and Karin Winkel. They have worked very hard getting this all ready and the list of books in the collection will be updated on a regular basis (more details are given below about the Library).

We also have another group working on the TRC's collection of images (postcards, photographs, even stamps) relating to textiles and costume from around the world. If you have any suitable items you are willing to donate to the TRC please do not hesitate to get in touch with us.

**TRC Needles:** *TRC Needles* is a digital encyclopaedia of decorative needlework and has now, by the end of 2017, been on-line for just over six months. Needles currently includes nearly 2000 entries and more and more information and partners are agreeing to help with the entries and providing information and/or photographs. They range from the modern stitch poetry of Janet M. McDonald Davies (New Zealand) to early archaeological finds of embroidery from China.

\*\*\*

### Strengthening the TRC archives and research facilities

In the spring of 2017 the TRC was given over 4,000 textiles and garments by Pepin van Rooijen (see below). As part of the Pepin donation there was also a large number of old postcards and prints that have been scanned and put online in the TRC Collection database. These include Dutch costumes as well as many from the Middle East. All of these are now online as part of the TRC image collection.



*Gera with a girl from Walcheren in Zeeland, in the southwestern part of the Netherlands (1929).*

In October 2017 the TRC Leiden was given a small photo album that dates from 1929. It depicts daily life in Zeeland just before the Second World War. A way of life, including many of the garment types that have now vanished. The album includes 39 photographs taken during the holiday of Mr and Mrs N.G.J Schouwenburg from Amsterdam. They and their young daughter, Gera, then aged one, were in Zutphen in Overijssel, in the East of the Netherlands, and in Oostkapelle in Zeeland (in the south) for a holiday. The album contains both family images of the Schouwenburgs and Gera (she regularly appears in the photographs).

With respect to the TRC interest in dress and identity, the images in this album present a fascinating glimpse of life for a middle class urban family (the ladies are wearing some wonderful cloche hats), who were clearly interested in the regional dress still worn on a daily basis by men, women and children in Zeeland.

One of the aims of the TRC is to present online a range of photographs and other images relating to textile and dress history from around the world, such as those represented by the Pepin Collection and the Schouwenburg album. If you have any photographs that you know the date, place and perhaps even the people depicted, and you would be willing to donate to them TRC can you please let us know at [info@trc-leiden.nl](mailto:info@trc-leiden.nl).

### **The Library**

Over the years the TRC has built up a collection of over 3,500 books relating to textiles and dress.

The library is divided into the following sections:

- General reference book
- Museum collections, displays, conservation and so forth
- Textile techniques
- Textiles, fashion and dress theory
- Regional (international)
- Dutch regional

\*

### **Recommended books**

There are many books on textiles, clothing and accessories and related subjects now available, and we are often asked to recommend books for students, academics and the general public. So in 2014 the TRC started a webpage ('Books Showcased', since then called NewTextileBooks) with an annotated list of some recent acquisitions for our library that we feel will be of interest to 'textile' people. Some of these books will be of general interest, others intended for specialists. Not all books will be new to the market, but they will form an important part of the TRC's ever expanding library.

Various publications were described for the 2017 Books Showcased. These ranged from embroidery to ikat via the history of textiles. More and more publishers are sending books to us for inclusion in the lists. A pdf list of these and other books can be found under the TRC Library 'ladder'. In addition, the list of TRC recommended books has been cross-referenced to the on-line catalogue of books in the TRC library.

\*

### **Donations for the library are always welcome!**

Gillian Vogelsang-Eastwood

Throughout 2017 the TRC was also given donations of books. At the beginning of May, for example, I visited the Fowler Museum, Los Angeles in order to help with a Syrian collection and setting up plans for an exhibition. The



Museum is home to a large collection of textiles and dress and produces the *Fowler Museum Textile Series*. The series was started in 1998. It contains a series of well-illustrated monographs about the history and types of textiles and garments from around the world. Copies of many of these books have recently been donated to the TRC by the Fowler Museum director, Marla C. Shirley, I greatly appreciate and acknowledge the generosity of the Museum.

\*

### Seth Siegelau and textile books



*Nelleke Honcoop, one of the TRC volunteers, sorting out the new publications for the TRC Library.*

In June 2017 the TRC was given a collection of over 1500 textile and dress publications (books, journals, off-prints). These were part of the library of the American artist and textile book collector, Seth Siegelau. Sadly Seth died a few years ago and his main library is now being looked after by his widow Marja, while his smaller, working library has come to the TRC.

This donation means a lot of work for the library team during the year or so, but it also ensures that the TRC will have a wonderful resource that will be an important tool in our research projects, and those of others.

### Acquisitions, Purchases and Gifts

The TRC now regards it as normal for people to pop in every week with items for the collection. And while we encourage this and the size of the TRC is naturally growing, we need a lot more space and this need is getting more and more urgent.

There are two main factors that make the TRC Collection a little different from many traditional museum collections. Firstly it is an active collection and people are encouraged to come and look, photograph and use the items, rather than them being stored 'for ever' in boxes. Secondly, we are not concerned with only collecting beautiful and inspirational items, but we are seriously interested in the story behind. Something that may look 'ordinary' takes on a new dimension when its social, economic context – the story behind – is taken into consideration.

To help people understand the diversity of the TRC Collection, the database of the collection has gone online on 1st July 2016. Not every item is described in great detail (there are over 18,500 items after all at the end of 2017), nor are there photographs of everything. But every week new details and images are added and after two years, all items will be fully described and provided with one or more photographs.

The following descriptions of some of the items added to the TRC Collection in 2017 have been given in a chronological order, rather than based on geographical or cultural considerations. The descriptions and comments about these objects are intended to give an idea of why these items were accepted into the collection and how they will be used.

\*

### The Pepin Collection

In early 2017 Pepin van Roojen of Pepin Press (Amsterdam) donated a collection of textiles and garments that include Islamic fashion, Chinese clothes, as well as, yes, cowgirl outfits and garments from the USA. The latter are especially welcome as they will help to build up our North



American collection. We are going to create various digital exhibitions about these items.

In addition, there are a number of swatch books (from the USA, France, Japan and The Netherlands) as well as thousands (literally) of textile samples dating to the 20th century, which were the property of an art expert in Paris, who worked with various Parisian fashion houses. Many of these samples are printed and represent typical and atypical textiles for 20th century European/Western fashion.

The Pepin donation means that the TRC Collection is growing more rapidly than expected. Due to the scale of work involved, the cataloguing of these textiles will continue into 2018. But because of their presence we are getting more and more enquiries from design schools and commercial groups. A few of the stories associated with textiles and garments from the Pepin collection are given below.

\*

### **Back in time: Two new and fascinating acquisitions for the TRC Collection**

Among the various Pepin embroidery boxes there was one that contained numerous examples of 20th century machine embroidery that represent various techniques and machines types. The box included a skilfully worked piece of machine embroidery depicting the mythical phoenix bird and the text "Gruss aus Gudetenland!" Gudetenland [sic] used to be part of Czechoslovakia and consisted of a German speaking enclave (part of Sudetenland).

In 1938 it became part of Germany following Hitler's annexation of Austria, Sudetenland and the Polish Corridor. After the end of the Second World War (1939-1945), Gudetenland was once again made part of Czechoslovakia, its name was changed and most of the German population was forced to emigrate.

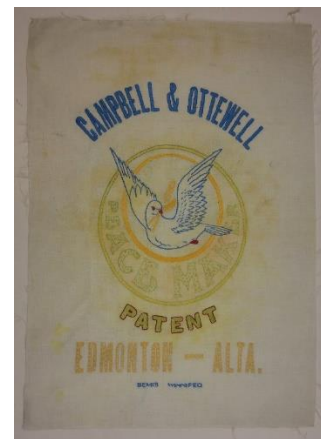
The use of a German text and the image of a phoenix (a bird image relating to re-birth and resurgence) suggest that this embroidery dates to

the late 1930's or early 1940's and reflects the annexation by Hitler's Germany of parts of what was then Czechoslovakia.



*Machine embroidered memento of the German annexation of Gudetenland. TRC 2017.0423*

A second embroidery from one of the boxes is also related to war, but this time the First World War (1914-1918). From October 1914, various American and Canadian charities purchased food, including flour, for sending to Belgium. The flour mills started to send their flour in cotton bags to the Netherlands (which was neutral during the war). This vital commodity was then sent onto war stricken Belgium. Many of these bags had printed designs wishing the Belgian people peace or with patriotic symbols and messages.



*Embroidered flower bag, First World War. TRC 2017.0422*

These bags were re-used for a wide variety of functions, including garments, curtains, bedding and so forth. Many were also cut up and the printed sections were embroidered in Belgium and some of them then sent back to Canada and the

USA as souvenirs, to raise money and as a way of saying 'thank you' for the flour.

Among the collection we were given by Pepin there is the front section of a flour bag that has been hand embroidered. The embroidered flour bag includes the texts "Campbell and Ottewell Peace Maker Patent Edmonton - Alta Bemis Winnipeg". There is also a large image of a flying dove (symbol of peace) carrying stalks of wheat. All of this indicates that this is a WW1 embroidered flour bag. The bag was produced by the Canadian flour milling company of Campbell and Ottewell of Edmonton, Alberta.

\*

### Yippee ki-ya! Cowgirl clothes Shelley Anderson



*Detail of a cowgirl shirt embroidered with horse rider. TRC 2017.0267*

Among the Pepin donation there were some additions to our North American collection: cowgirl clothes. Sometimes called Western wear, these items include long sleeved, plaid shirts (TRC 2017.0252 and TRC 2017.0253) and shirts with distinctive piping around the yoke and snap buttons (TRC 2017.0269 and TRC 2017.0264), sometimes embroidered with horses or red roses (TRC 2017.0257, TRC 2017.0267, TRC 2017.0253). There is an iconic buckskin-like jacket with fringes and an accompanying leather skirt with fringes on the hem (TRC 2017.0274 and TRC 2017.0275).

Western wear evolved during the nineteenth century in the American West for work in harsh

conditions. There were many influences: buffalo skin coats, moccasins (worn before the mass production of boots) and decorative fringes on leather garments came from Native Americans; broad-brimmed hats, heavy belts decorated with silver, and leather chaps originated from Spanish and Mexican riders, as did the custom of embroidering red roses on shirts. Chaps evolved from a sort of leather apron, split in half in order to wrap around the legs to protect valuable cloth trousers from being damaged by cacti or dirt.

The story of Western wear is also the story of American business: the use of plaid, or tartan, supposedly arose from Scottish traders exchanging such cloth for goods by Native Americans. The iconic ten-gallon hat was invented by a hat maker from New Jersey, who moved to the West for his health. John B. Stetson fashioned a felt hat with a wide brim to keep off the sun; he gave his hat a water proof lining so he could also use it as a water bucket. Westerners liked his invention: he started mass producing hats in 1865. Shoemaker Charles Hyer of Kansas is said to have created the cowboy boot in the mid-1870s, getting inspiration from the boots that soldiers wore during the American Civil War (1861-1865). Also in the 1870s, a German immigrant named Levi Strauss started marketing tough work trousers made of blue denim, reinforced with rivets for more strength.

Last but not least, many of the Western wear garments recently acquired by the TRC carry the brand name Roebuck. This brand was launched in 1949 by one of America's biggest retailers, the Sears Company, to advertise their blue jeans. By the 1950s, films and television Westerns had made cowboy wear popular in all parts of the USA. The Sears' jeans were advertised as "friendly fittin' as a western saddle." The brand continues today as Sears's line of work clothes.

\*

### American Feedsacks

Also among the textiles given to the TRC by Pepin were over thirty printed food sacks from the USA. These were large bags made of cotton that

were used for corn, flour, sugar, rice, and so forth in the USA and Canada.

Bag and sack producers soon discovered that if the cotton sacks were decorated with a colourful printed design, then people would buy their bags (and contents). By the 1920's garments and household objects (such as curtains and quilts) made out of these food sacks became an economic necessity in many poorer families. With the Great Depression of the 1930's even more families depended on these sacks to provide basic textile necessities for family and household use. The sacks came in various sizes and qualities depending on what was being stored in them – flour bags tended to be a finer cloth than, for example, those used for maize or sugar.

Thanks to a generous donation from the American Embassy Small Grant Program (see above), these and other feedsack items form the basis for an exhibition on feedsacks, garments and quilts to be held at the TRC Gallery in 2018.

\*

### **A knitted cap from the Fair Isle**



*Fair Isle knitted cap. TRC 2017.0006*

In February 2017 the TRC was given a hand-knitted Fair Isle cap (TRC 2017.0006) for a child, by Brigitta Schreuder. Her father-in-law used to travel in the 1960s as a guest on merchant ships and went to many places around the world. He would buy a souvenir at each of his ports of call, including the Fair Isle, which is an island that lies off the northern coast of Scotland. It belongs to the Shetland Island group. The island has long been famous for the production of knitted goods, including caps, gloves, jumpers, and so forth,

which were originally worn by the fishermen, but became fashion statements in the twentieth century.

The cap now in the TRC collection has been examined by Lies van de Wege (TRC volunteer) and she has made a pattern chart that can be used for knitting, embroidery, beadwork, and so forth.

\*

### **Laila Ingrams' Yemeni garments**

Among the recent acquisitions to the TRC Collection are several unusual and interesting groups of objects. These include a small number of Yemeni garments given by the family of Laila Ingrams, who died recently. She was the daughter of Harold and Doreen Ingrams, the famous British writers and explorers of the Arabian Peninsula. The garments include items for both men and women.

One of the more intriguing items is a dress from the island of Socotra, which lies to the south of Yemen. The TRC already has a comparable garment, also from Socotra.

\*

### ***Philip V of Spain and Queen Maria Luisa: A serviette from 1701 with a long history***

In May 2017 the TRC acquired a large linen serviette (115 x 88 cm), which has a fascinating history (TRC 2017.0799). It is made from a damask weave and was designed to celebrate the marriage of King Philip V of Spain and Maria Luisa of Savoy in 1701. The cloth depicts the King and Queen, as well as the arms of both royal houses. The representations on the right hand side are a mirror image of those on the left hand side.

At the top of the cloth is the text VIVANT ET REGNENT PHILIPPUS V HISPANIARUM REX ET CONIUX EIUS LUDOVICA REGINA ('MAY PHILIPS V, KING OF THE SPANISH,



AND HIS WIFE QUEEN LUISA LIVE AND REIGN LONG') set inside a laural wreath.



*The text and designs on the damask serviette woven for the wedding of Philip V of Spain and his wife, Queen Maria Luisa of Savoy, in 1701*

One of the reasons why serviettes in this period were so large is because women's dresses were particularly grand and a large piece of cloth was needed to protect the garments during meals.

Philip V (1683-1746) was the grandson of Louis XIV of France. His accession to the Spanish throne in 1700, which led to close dynastic links between France and Spain and the shifting of the balance of power in Europe, resulted in the War of the Spanish Succession, which was concluded in 1713 with the Treaty of Utrecht (and the occupation by Great Britain of Gibraltar, and the port of Antwerp being permanently blockaded by the Dutch). His wife was fourteen years old when she married. She died in 1714 of tuberculosis.

\*

### Reisbord Donation

In May 2017 a few days were spent in Los Angeles with friends, David and Elizabeth Reisbord, looking at their textile collection and dreaming of what the TRC could and should do in the future. They very kindly gave the TRC a group of Guatemalan textiles and garments and Indian embroideries. The latter will be used in the TRC's

forthcoming encyclopaedia about embroideries from Iran, Central Asia and the Indian subcontinent. In addition, the TRC was given several textiles and a woman's coat from Uzbekistan, which were on view in an exhibition called "Dressing the Stans" that opened in September 2017 at the TRC Gallery.



*A woman's outdoor coat from Uzbekistan, donated to the TRC by David and Elizabeth Reisbord (TRC 2017.0785).*

\*

### A Cambodian silver textile with a Dutch connection



*Detail of Cambodian silver thread textile, mid-20th century (TRC 2017.2572).*

Some years ago we were given an early 19th century lace shawl once owned by the Dutch queen, Anna Pawlovna (TRC 2014.0831). And in 2017 the TRC was given another textile with a royal connection in the form of a length of purple with silver thread cloth (TRC 2017.2572), which was given to Mrs. Eygenstein, Amsterdam by the Cambodian prince, Norodom Sondeth, a cousin to the then king, Norodom Sihanouk (1922-2012)



and at that time the Cambodian Minister of Foreign Affairs. The textile was given as a 'thank you' to Mrs. Eygenstein following his stay in The Netherlands in 1952.

Mrs. Eygenstein was the translator for the prince and during his visit helped him in purchasing film and still camera (a Hasselblad), as well as a motor bike (which he later crashed). The Eygenstein family and the prince stayed in contact for some years and he also sent a letter expressing his concern and regret for the Dutch people during the devastating floods of 1953 that killed hundreds of people, especially in Zeeland in the southern part of the country. They then lost contact, but in 1970's Mrs. Eygenstein tried to reach him again, but heard that he along with other, lesser members of the Cambodian royal family had been murdered by the Khmer Rouge, the communist group that came to power in 1975 under the command of Pol Pot.

We would like to thank Mrs. Eygenstein's daughter, Mrs. Corretje Eijgenstein, for so very kindly giving this and other Asian textiles to the TRC. In particular she also gave a very large felt from Kyrgyzstan, which will be on display in the TRC Gallery as part of its Central Asian exhibition that opened on the 12th September 2017.

\*

### **Ethiopian embroidered trousers**

At the end of May 2017 the TRC acquired four pairs of men's trousers from Ethiopia (TRC 2017.2567- 2017.2570). These date to the latter half of the 20th century and are associated with the Amhara people, from the northern and central highlands of the country.

Three of the trousers are made from narrow bands of locally woven cotton and they have been embroidered with circles, zig-zags and interlacing knots using various stitches, including chain stitch. The fourth pair is made from black machine woven cloth and embroidered using machine produced chain stitch. The TRC is slowly building up its collection of African textiles and garments,

and these trousers add a new dimension to our holdings.



*Pair of Ethiopian trousers with embroidered legs, second half 20th century (TRC 2017.2570).*

\*

### **Amish Garments** Shelley Anderson

As part of building up of the North America collection, the TRC has been actively acquiring examples of American 'regional' dress. One interesting group are the Amish, who were visited by Shelley Anderson in the late summer of 2017.

Jamesport is home to the largest community of Amish people west of the Mississippi River. Some 165 Amish families live and farm around the town of Jamesport, Missouri (USA). You can see them driving horse-drawn buggies on the roads (the use of cars and electricity is considered too worldly). They worship according to their Anabaptist beliefs and still speak the German dialect their ancestors did when they first came to North America in the 1700s. They also wear a distinctive form of clothing that they call 'plain' or 'simple' dress. I wanted to buy some examples of this clothing for the TRC. Amish clothing is unadorned, in muted colours. The women wear ankle-length

dressess, with an apron and bonnet; the men long trousers with shoulder straps. The clothing appears old fashioned in the 21st century and immediately distinguishes the wearer as a community member.



*Pair of trousers for an Amish man, from Jamesport, Missouri, USA, 2017 (TRC 2017.2986).*

Two local shops in Jamesport gave me the same advice: drive down the hill for three miles, cross the railroad tracks, and look for the first building on the left. The directions were spot on: inside this shop were rows and rows of used Amish clothing, plus pickles, preserves, and other home goods for sale.

All the clothes were of a synthetic mix (except for a few pairs of denim trousers), and were of factory woven material. The clothes were also all skillfully home made, except for the men's long sleeved white shirts, which were factory-made. While the male clothes showed no personal embellishments, there were small differences in some of the adult women's dresses. Almost all were loose fitting and ankle length, in solid pastel colours (primarily blue, grey and green), with no prints or checks. While all the sleeves reached below the elbow, some women had made close-fitting cuffs, others loose. On some dresses a thin strip of the dress material had been sewn around the cuffs, a discreet embellishment.

## Christening gown with a rich history



*Christening gown from 1947 made from parachute silk, embroidered with the names of seventeen young children who were baptised in the gown, between 1947 and 2013.*

In November 2017 the TRC was given a very special new acquisition for the collection by the Family 't Jong. It is a christening gown from the Netherlands, which was made in 1947 from parachute silk that the grandfather of the baby had acquired during the war. He had three daughters, and each of them got part of the silk cloth. Two sisters used it to make themselves a blouse, the third to make the christening gown for her first child. Not an easy thing to do, because the gown had to be made from a bias cut length of material with a diagonal seam across the middle of the gown. In order to hide that seam, the young mother embroidered along the seam the name, date of birth and place of birth of her little daughter. Later she added the date of the christening, the name and place of the church, the name of the vicar and the Bible text of the christening.

The christening gown was used many times in the family, and each time the name of the baby and all other details were embroidered onto the gown. And after seventeen babies the gown is almost completely covered. The last name to be added is dated the 12th March 2013, for a baptism in the town of Harderwijk.

## Indonesian ikat frames



*Four of the nine frames illustrating the various stages in binding and dyeing an ikat cloth*

In September 2017 the TRC registered a wonderful series of frames made by the ikat weavers from Kalimantan (Borneo), who were at the TRC in August (see below). The nine frames illustrate the various stages of setting up, binding and dyeing a set of warp threads ('web') using the ikat (resist, binding) technique before the coloured threads are woven into a piece of cloth.

The design chosen by the weavers for these pieces (both on the frames and the finished item) is a stylised boat, symbolising the journey through life both personally and for the TRC.

Basically the TRC Leiden is a 'boat' that is home to examples of different production techniques, textiles, garments, and so forth, which are not only stored here, but equally important, these items can be viewed, researched, published and exhibited, so that everyone around the globe can see them (actually or digitally), as well as preserving these objects for the future. The library, lectures and workshops are all part and parcel of the TRC experience and journey to becoming one of the most accessible cultural heritage resources (anywhere).

\*

## Syriac garments

During the process of setting up the Kaftan to Kippa exhibition, we were in contact with various members of the Syriac Orthodox Christian Community (see below). Thanks to the kindness

of Bishop Polycarpus and Father Antonius, the TRC was able to acquire a range of Syriac monastic and liturgical garments, literally from the white gown to a bishop's cope and headdress. These now form an important part of the TRC's religious attire collection.

\*\*\*

## Lace reference collection

Over the years the TRC has acquired numerous pieces of bobbin and needlemade lace. The need to build up a lace reference collection has been discussed on various occasions, but due to the lack of a specialist in this field, this part of the TRC collection has not had the attention it needed or deserved. Thanks to the help of Olga Ieromina the situation at the TRC has dramatically changed as Olga is a lace specialist with a wide range of knowledge both about the techniques used for lace making and the history of lace in general.

During 2017 she was busy making suitable storage panels for the collection and working on a system of identification. This is based on that used by the Powerhouse Museum, Sydney and the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, with a few TRC touches.

The TRC lace collection will be used for lace identification workshops, as well as for publications about the history of lace in general, and needlelace in particular.

\*\*\*

## TRC Exhibitions

Two major exhibitions were held at the TRC Gallery in 2017, the first was about Middle Eastern dress and religion, while the second was looking at Central Asian textiles as part of the Asia Year Celebrations in Leiden.

\*

## Opening of the *Kaftan to Kippa* exhibition, 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017 – 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2017

The 1st April 2017 saw His Excellency Mor Polycarpus Augin Aydin (Metropolitan of the Syriac Orthodox Church in The Netherlands), opening the TRC's exhibition, *From Kaftan to Kippa: Dress and Diversity in the Middle East*. This crowded, colourful and varied exhibition is one of the most complicated (and full) exhibitions ever attempted by the TRC.

The exhibition was based on the PhD thesis of Tineke Rooijackers (Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam), who has been a TRC volunteer since she was a first-year archaeology student. It also forms part of a larger scale project (*Fitting in / Standing out*) of the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, which is funded by the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (NWO).



*His Excellency Mor Polycarpus Augin Aydin (Metropolitan of the Syriac Orthodox Church in The Netherlands), talking with one of the young guests.*

The aim of the project, and the TRC exhibition, was to show how people use clothing to express

their desire to stand out in a crowd, and in some cases the exact opposite, to blend into a crowd.

The TRC exhibition included historical pieces, modern Islamic dress, Coptic outfits for the laity and clergy, Druze, Palestinian, Samaritan, Jewish, Syriac Orthodox Christian, as well as Bedouin and Kurdish garments. There were over eighty outfits for men, women and children, as well as accessories and textiles.

The opening of the exhibition was attended by over sixty people, who mingled among the mannequins to create an even bigger crowd.

The opening welcome came from Dr. Gillian Vogelsang-Eastwood, director of the TRC, who was followed by Prof. Bas ter Haar Romeny, who gave details about the history of the main project and how Tineke's work fitted into the research programme. Tineke subsequently gave a more personal view of her work on dress and diversity in Egypt and, more specifically, among the Coptic community.

Prof. Romeny presented His Excellency Mor Polycarpus with the first copy of the booklet accompanying the exhibition. His Excellency spoke some warm words of appreciation and expressed the wish to work with the TRC again in the near future. He then officially opened the exhibition.

The Kurdish part of the exhibition was partially organized by the 'Federatie Koerden in Nederland' and it was only fitting that following the official opening Kurdish snacks and sweets were provided for the guests.

\*

## *Dressing the 'Stans': Textiles, clothing and jewellery from Central Asia.* 15<sup>th</sup> September – 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2017

The Autumn exhibition at the TRC was created as part of the Asia Year celebrations in Leiden that culminated in the opening of the Leiden University's new Asia Library by H.R.H. Queen Maxima of the Netherlands. The TRC exhibition



(which was not opened by the Queen), was opened on Tuesday by Prof. Peter Frankopan, Oxford University and author of the now famous book *The Silk Roads* (2015).



*Opening of the TRC exhibition "Dressing the 'Stans', 12th September 2017, by Prof. Peter Frankopan.*

Prof. Frankopan gave a short, but very much to the point, talk about the important role of textiles, especially silk, in linking cultures and groups together over the centuries.

\*\*\*

### Mini-exhibitions

Several mini exhibitions were held in 2017 that were designed to be 'actual' and show how textiles and garments are currently being used. One of these, Subversive Stitching, was organised by Shelley Anderson and a report about this exhibition is given below.

\*

#### ***Subversive Stitching: The Pussy Hat*** Shelley Anderson

The TRC has a new acquisition: two pussy hats (TRC 2017.0186 and 0187). Pussy hats are hand-made, square-shaped caps made from wool or acrylic yarn, usually coloured pink. They can be knitted, crocheted or sewn. After Donald Trump won the US presidential election in November 2016, American knitters attempted to make over

one million of such hats, to be given as gifts for marchers to wear at the Women's March in Washington, DC. Patterns for the simple hat were shared via the Pussyhat Project website ([www.pussyhatproject.com](http://www.pussyhatproject.com)) and Facebook; many craft shops hosted groups of knitters making the hats. There were news reports of craft shops in different American cities being sold out of pink yarn. The deadline was 21 January 2017, the day of the Women's March.



When a pussy hat is worn on the head, two tips appear, similar to a cat's ears. This is not the origine of the cap's name, however. The word 'pussy' in English is an insulting term for a woman's genitals. In October 2016, during the presidential election campaign, The Washington Post newspaper released a video and accompanying article on lewd remarks made by Donald Trump about women. Recorded in a television studio parking lot in 2005, Trump told a television host: "I moved on her like a bitch, but I couldn't get there, and she was married. ...I'm automatically attracted to beautiful [women]—I just start kissing them. It's like a magnet. Just kiss. I don't even wait. And when you're a star they let you do it. You can do anything ... Grab them by the pussy. You can do anything."

The remarks outraged many as condoning sexual assault. Trump was forced to apologize publicly for the remarks. #Pussygrabsback became a popular hashtag; an artist put the words across a picture of a snarling cat's face and created a popular T-shirt. Knitters Krista Suh and Jayna Zweiman of Los Angeles, California (USA) thought of creating a symbol for women's solidarity and so launched the Pussyhat Project:

"It's reappropriating the word 'pussy' in a positive way....Wearing pink together is a powerful statement that we are unapologetically feminine and we unapologetically stand for women's rights." Their knitting instructor, Kat Coyle, created a pattern that could be easily customized. All three wanted to celebrate the traditionally female work of knitting and crochet: "Knitting circles are sometimes scoffed at as frivolous 'gossiping circles,' when really, these circles are powerful gatherings of women, a safe space to talk, a place where women support women."

By December the group had collected sixty thousand hats, sent to them from all fifty US states—and from Europe and New Zealand. The pussyhat had gone international. So had the Women's March. Scheduled for 21 January 2017, the day after Trump was inaugurated as US President, the March's aim was to make a powerful statement for human rights. The organizers hoped two hundred thousand people would show up. Instead, over half a million came. Crowd specialists calculated that the protest march drew three times the number of people Trump's inauguration had attracted.

At the same time, three thousand people gathered in front of the National Museum in Amsterdam for the March and another one thousand in The Hague. Worldwide between three to four million people participated on 21 January 2017. And a good number of them wore pink pussyhats.

The pink woollen hats now in the TRC collection were made by the Rev. Ramona Scarpace on a circle frame. One (TRC 2017.0187) was worn on 21 January 2017 at the Women's March in St. Paul, Minnesota (USA) by the knitter's partner, the Rev. Georgianna Smith. The official police estimate for the number of participants at this march was ninety thousand people.

\*

### **Carpets for bicycles**

During the 'Dressing the Stans' exhibition, there was also a mini-exhibition about saddle cloths or rather carpets for bicycles and motorbikes. There

are three such hand knotted carpets in the TRC Collection. They come from Afghanistan and date from the 1970's. They were given to the TRC by Prof. Mark Slobin in 2016.



*An Afghan bicycle saddle carpet (1970's; TRC 2016.1864)*

Judging from the comments from visitors, there would be a potential sales opportunity for anyone with a small, carpet loom and knowledge of knotting carpets in Afghanistan!

\*\*\*

### **Digital exhibitions**

In addition to getting the TRC Collection online we are also working on a series of digital exhibitions that reflect the range and depth of the collection. Various old exhibitions are being re-vamped, including the one on Coptic clothing. But there will also be a series of new exhibitions, including First World War embroidered postcards, Ancient Greece loom weights, Berlin work charts, and many others.

\*\*\*

### **Ikat dyeing and weaving at the TRC**

Gillian Vogelsang-Eastwood

From the 12th – 24th August 2017, the TRC was host to two weavers, Mapung Salomina and Emiliana, together with Mrs. Musrikah Siti. Mrs. Siti is a museum curator and representative of the

*Koperasi Jasa Menenun Mandiri*, a weaving co-operation with well over 1200 members, of which c. 300 are weaving on a daily basis. All are from Sintang, Kalimantan (Borneo) in Indonesia. Their visit was facilitated by Esmeralda and Theo Zee, both of whom with strong connections with Indonesia.



*Participants to the ikat workshop having lessons on how to weave on a body-tension loom.*

A series of ten workshops and lectures were presented to over seventy participants. These meetings helped people to understand the process of ikat production, from the preparation of the cotton threads (using a spindle wheel), to the binding of the warps for ikat making, the dyeing of the threads and the weaving of the end product. In addition, there were extra workshops on various basic basketry and beading techniques.

The weavers, Mapung Salomina and Emiliana, set up two ikat looms in the TRC Gallery and this number was increased to four for the weaving workshops. This meant that each of the participants had at least thirty minutes working on the loom, learning and understanding the basic movements and techniques required. Every movement was watched and corrected by Mapung and Emiliana. It was hard work, especially for people who are not used to working with body-tensioned looms. But it certainly increased everyone's appreciation of, and respect for what is involved in making an ikat textile in this manner.

The strict approach of the teachers was reflected in the binding lesson, when one (unfortunate) participant had spent a long time binding some warp threads only to have all bindings removed

because they were not done in the 'proper' manner! A fact that was appreciated by the participants, as Mapung and Emiliana made it clear that the groups were there to learn new techniques and not to develop their own forms. The need for the participants to change how they thought about a design, how to describe it and more importantly how to communicate it from the brain to fingers was very apparent. People learnt a lot about themselves as well as about Sintang forms of working.

These workshops were very well attended and intensive – there was a lot to take in within a relatively short period (generally three hours). The educational function of the TRC also came to the fore in two lectures that were given, one by Ms. Esmeralda Zee, assisted by Musrikah Siti, Mapung Salomina and Emiliana, and the second by myself, about non-Indonesian ikats, based on historical and modern examples in various museums, as well as in the TRC Collection. The use of deep fringes on the Ecuadorian ikats was especially noted. Mrs. Musrikah Siti is now going to develop a series of talks about non-Indonesian ikats to show how Indonesian forms fit within a global setting.



*Lecture on the identification of Indonesian ikats, by Esmeralda Zee.*

The weavers came with a variety of items for sale, some of which the TRC has purchased. In addition, we have acquired one of the looms used for the workshops – with the web, heddles and sticks all in place as well as ordering a series of small-scale frames that show step-by-step how a Sintang ikat is made. These will form the basis of a digital exhibition about ikats from around the world to be published in the near future.



The closing ceremony on Thursday afternoon (24th August 2017) was carried out by Prof. Bambang Hari Wibisono, the cultural attaché of the Indonesian Embassy in The Hague. His presence was greatly appreciated by all, as it confirms how important such cultural exchanges and events are, both in Indonesia and the Netherlands.

\*\*\*

### ***Encyclopedia of Embroidery Series***

The TRC exhibition *What is Embroidery?* (TRC Gallery 2015) ran parallel to the working on *The Encyclopedia of Embroidery from the Arab World*, compiled by Gillian Vogelsang, director TRC, with the help of many others. The book was published on the 28<sup>th</sup> February 2016 by Bloomsbury in London (ca. 750 pp., with some 700 illustrations).

This monumental work includes 45 separate articles about the techniques, decorative forms and uses of embroidery from Morocco in the west to Iraq in the east, from the period of Tutankhamun in ancient Egypt to the present day.

As noted above in January 2017, this book has won the prestigious international award, *The Dartmouth Medal*. As a result Bloomsbury has agreed to a series of encyclopedias on the history of world embroidery. These will be produced over the next seven years.

\*

### ***Vol 2: Encyclopedia of Embroidery from the Central Asia, the Iranian Plateau and the Indian Sub-continent***

The second volume in the *Encyclopedia of Embroidery* series is about embroidery from Central Asia, the Iranian Plateau and the Indian Subcontinent. It covers archaeological and historical evidence for embroidery as well as discussions about decorative needlework from the nineteenth to the beginning of the twenty-first centuries.



*An example of Agra metal thread (zardozi) embroidery (TRC 2017.2785).*



*A selection of printing blocks for Lucknow chikan embroidery (photograph by Gillian Vogelsang-Eastwood).*

Examples of suitable embroidery, equipment and samples were acquired in various countries including India, as well as using examples in museum collections, notably the British Museum, and the Metropolitan Museum. Numerous examples from the TRC Collection have also been included in this volume.

\*

### ***The TRC and Parsi embroidery*** Gillian Vogelsang-Eastwood

One of the groups I was talking with in India are the Parsis, a Zoroastrian group from what is now Iran that has lived in India for a thousand years. They have long been merchants especially with China and not surprisingly, there is a strong Chinese feel (design, colour and technique wise) to much of their embroidery. In the past they also produced European Berlin wool work designs, and amazing portraits worked using ultra-fine single



stranded silk threads, as well as their own versions of the Chinese embroideries. The latter combine Chinese, Iranian, Indian and European elements. Various examples of Parsi embroidery, including a sampler (2017.2737 and 2017.2738), were ordered for the TRC Collection

In addition to talking about embroideries we also talked about Zoroastrian clothing and I was able to order for the TRC Collection some special items that are worn under normal garments, plus a beaded toran (TRC 2017.2725), a form of decoration that goes over the doorway to welcome visitors and protect the home.

\*\*\*

### **Future volumes of the Encyclopedia of Embroidery Series**

Work has already started on future volumes of the embroidery series. These currently under consideration are (vol. 3) Embroidery from Scandinavia, Western Europe and Southern Europe, (vol. 4) Embroidery from Central and Eastern Europe and Russia, and (vol. 5) Embroidery from Sub-Saharan Africa (to be carried out with Julia Hudson, The British Museum, London).

We are always looking for examples of embroidery (historical and modern) for the TRC Collection and for inclusion in the Encyclopedia series. If you have any items you would be willing to donate to the TRC, please do not hesitate to get in contact at [info@trc-leiden.nl](mailto:info@trc-leiden.nl)

\*\*\*

### **Silk Stockings Project** Chrystel Brandenburg

In the summer of 2017, Dr. Chrystel Brandenburg made the suggestion that the TRC should be involved in the study of a group of textiles and garments discovered in a seventeenth century shipwreck found off the coast of the island of Texel in the north of The Netherlands. Among the items identified was a pair of hand knitted silk

stockings.



*The 17<sup>th</sup> century silk stockings from Texel*

An application for funding was sent to the Prins Bernhard Cultuurfonds and thanks to their support the Silk Stockings project was made possible. The project official commenced in November 2017.



\*

Since the first announcement of the **TRC Silk Stockings project** in November 2017, we have been overwhelmed by enthusiastic people wanting to participate. More than 100 people have volunteered to join in and to help to reconstruct the silk stockings of the Texel seventeenth century shipwreck. We even had people from the USA and Canada wanting to join in!

The first workshops took place in the beginning of 2018 and in order to prepare ourselves for this big event we asked four experienced knitters to help us make a preselection of yarns and silks and knit several test swatches. Using needles of 0.7 and 1

mm and threads of max. 0.5 mm, this was quite a challenge. To be honest, the first half hour was not very encouraging. “You can’t knit with this thread!” and “This is not possible...!”

Luckily for us the ladies rose to the challenge and bravely plodded on. When after three hours the first centimetres were ready and the faces looked considerably happier. “Do-able”, “You have to take your time” and “The first rows are the hardest, but it is always like that”.



*And ever finer silk thread. TRC, 29th December 2017.*

Thanks to the work of these brave knitters we can now make a good selection of yarns and needles for the participants of the workshops to start with.

Would you like to stay up-to-date on the project? Please send us an email at:

[info@textilearchaeology.nl](mailto:info@textilearchaeology.nl)

and we will put you on the list for the newsletter.

\*\*\*

## Wednesday Workshops

The popularity of the Wednesday Workshops was confirmed in 2017, when most workshops were sold out months in advance.

More Wednesday workshops are being planned for the next few years.

\*

## TRC Leiden, Intensive Textile Course

The TRC’s intensive textile course was held three times in 2017, in April, September and October. Participants for the courses came from a variety of countries, including the USA, Britain, Italy, Russia, as well as the Netherlands.

The course is a mixture of theoretical and practical elements, with an emphasis on trying out the various techniques of textile production (spinning, dyeing, weaving), on holding and examining fibres, textiles and finished items, all in order to learn and understand what is happening and why various combinations take place. The aim is to make textiles less ‘frightening’ and allow people to look at a textile, from virtually any historical period or culture, and be able to understand it.

\*

## Lace identification Workshop

4-5 November 2017

Shelley Anderson

There were eight participants (from four different countries) at the TRC’s weekend workshop on “Identification of Lace”. The workshop was expertly led by Olga Ieromina, a TRC volunteer and an enthusiastic lace maker herself. Olga began by giving a working definition of lace as a decorative openwork fabric, in which the pattern, and any ground that links the pattern parts, are gradually built up by the interworking of free threads.

She explained four different markers that can be used to identify lace: how is it made (for example, handmade or machine made, the type of stitches used in construction, etc); what type of lace (needle lace, bobbin lace, hairpin lace, etc.); what kind of thread is used (examples included linen, silk, cotton, synthetic, wool or metal); and the lace’s country of origin and date.

A brief history of lace followed, from its 15<sup>th</sup> century origins in southern European embroidery and cut work, through the 17<sup>th</sup> century’s stunning needle lace (much of which originated in Venice),

to the rise of Flemish bobbin lace in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and on to the 19<sup>th</sup> century's machine lace.



*TRC weekend lace workshop, 4-5 November 2017*

We then began the most enjoyable part of a very enjoyable weekend—identifying, examining and handling many different and beautiful examples of lace in the TRC collection, from continuous to guipure, looped or appliqued; made by hand and by a variety of machines (including Puschers, Barmen and chemical). Our learning was enhanced by a series of short video clips, which showed how different laces were made and by the experiences of the participants themselves, whether we were curators, collectors, craftswomen, conservators or in the vintage business. Olga also produced a very useful handout on lace identification for each participant. I came away from the workshop with more knowledge and even more admiration for the creators of such complex and beautiful textiles.

\*

### Other Activities

In addition to the exhibitions and research projects, the TRC was involved in a variety of other activities and events. Some of these were social, such as welcoming visiting groups at the TRC, as well as giving lectures and talks about textiles in other institutions.

\*

### *ORTS and the TRC*

The Oriental Rug and Textile Society (ORTS, London) is an active group that regularly meets in London and elsewhere to explore the world of carpets, rugs and textiles. On the 18<sup>th</sup> January 2017 Gillian Vogelsang-Eastwood gave a lecture at the club in London about the TRC Leiden, its collection and the range of work carried out there.

This lecture was given in preparation for an ORTS group visit to the TRC and other institutes in The Netherlands in March 2017.

The ORTS group came to the TRC on the 23<sup>rd</sup> March and spent several hours looking at the exhibition (about Middle Eastern dress, see above), as well as exploring the depots and talking with colleagues. The visit went far too quickly.

\*\*\*

### *Brunei Gallery exhibition, London*

Gillian Vogelsang-Eastwood

19<sup>th</sup> January 2017

In January 2017, as part of the official opening of a beautiful exhibition about embroidered and woven textiles and garments from Central Asia, India and the Middle East at the Brunei Gallery (SOAS) in London, Dr. Gillian Vogelsang-Eastwood was asked to give a lecture at SOAS about the history of embroidery in the region.



*Embroidered prayer mat from Afghanistan*

The exhibition was called “Embroidered Tales, Woven Dreams” and was curated by Marian Bukhari. It was on display until the 25th March 2017.

The exhibition included a wide range of textiles and garments from Afghanistan, Central Asia, the Indian subcontinent, as well as the Middle East. Many of the items on display came from Marian Bukhari’s personal collection, as well as several other private collections.

\*

### ***TextielPlus at the TRC*** 8th April 2017

In the March 2017 issue of *TextielPlus* there was a long article about the TRC, its origins, work and the people who run this amazing place (if I may say so myself....). *TextielPlus* also helped organise a special day (8th April) at the TRC for its subscribers. This event consisted of two groups, one in the morning and one in the afternoon, of textile lovers, who had the chance of a guided tour of the TRC and its latest exhibition about dress and identity in the Middle East.

Both sets of visitors were very enthusiastic and enjoyed the visit of the storages, workshop, shop, as well as the exhibition. No one within the group had ever been to the TRC before, so it was a welcome opportunity to get to know each other. People had the chance to see some embroideries from the recently acquired Pepin Collection (see above), namely a First World War flour bag embroidery, and a Gudetenland [sic] embroidery dating to the beginning of the Second World War. Two embroideries with two very different stories behind them.

A wide range of questions were posed about the running of the TRC, donations (object wise and financial) as well as its future. A number of people also signed up to become Friends of the TRC and offered help in various manners, which is much appreciated.

\*

### **The TRC and the Fowler Museum**

During the summer of 2017 Gillian Vogelsang-Eastwood, director of the TRC Leiden, spent ten days in Los Angeles working at the Fowler Museum, on the campus of the University of California, Los Angeles. In particular she was working on a collection of early 20th century Syrian garments, including abayas, head coverings and çarsafs. Some of the garments are the most beautiful examples of silk tapestry weaving.

\*

### **A trip to the Fowler Museum, UCLA, Los Angeles, USA**

April/May 2017; Gillian Vogelsang-Eastwood

I was asked by the Fowler Museum, UCLA, to comment on a collection of Syrian garments they are in the process of being given by a private collector, David Reisbord. The garments are a spectacular group and all being well will feature in an exhibition at the Museum in March 2019.

I left Leiden on the Thursday in order to get over jet lag in time for work on the following Monday. Friday saw a visit to the Getty Museum, and the chance to see four hundred years of European paintings, including some, but not as many as I had hoped for, with embroidered garments. On Saturday afternoon (29<sup>th</sup> April 2017), I gave a lecture about embroidery in the Arab world to the Textile Museum Associates of Southern California (TMA/SC) based in Los Angeles. Despite a change of venue and time there was a full house and extra chairs had to be sought. The lecture was called "1001 Embroidered Tales" and looked at the social and economic stories behind individual pieces and groups of embroideries in the Middle East. At the end of the meeting various members of the public displayed and talked about items they had brought with them.

I also had the chance to talk about the work of the TRC and several people offered their help in obtaining pieces and thinking who might be willing to financially help the TRC. A special guest was Professor Olaf Kaper from Leiden,



board member of the TRC, and at that moment in Los Angeles upon the invitation of the Getty.

One lady in particular, Marge Gajicki (The Folk Motif) went out of her way (literally as she lived in Long Beach about 50 km away) to get items of Hispanic and Western clothing, including a bolo tie that was given by her brother-in-law and several shirts of different styles, including Western, Hispanic and Hawaiian forms.

Monday saw work start on the collection at the Fowler and the next few days were spent in photographing, cataloguing and discussing the collection, as well as talking with the exhibition and the publication committees. On Wednesday evening (3rd May) I gave a talk to the Fowler Textile Council at the Museum, with the chief curator of the Museum, Matthew Robb as my 'assistant'. My talk was about the garments I was working on and the audience was given a sneak preview of an exhibition that does not (yet) exist. All I can say is that if and when the paper work is in order it will be a colourful and surprising display of Syrian garments, most of which date to the early 20th century.

One of the guests was Willeke Wendrich, now Professor of Egyptology in Los Angeles, who was one of the first Board members of the TRC in Leiden.

As noted earlier, the next few days prior to leaving were spent with friends, David and Elizabeth Reisbord, looking at their textile collection. They very kindly gave the TRC a group of Guatemalan textiles and garments and Indian embroideries. The latter will be used in the TRC's forthcoming encyclopaedia about embroideries from Iran, Central Asia and the Indian subcontinent. In addition, the TRC was given several textiles and a woman's coat from Uzbekistan, which can be seen in our forthcoming exhibition called "Dressing the Stans" that opened in September 2017 at the TRC Gallery (see above).

\*\*\*

While at the Fowler Museum it was mentioned that they had a series of books about textiles and

clothing (well worth looking into). So on behalf of the TRC Library I went into begging mode and Marla Berns, the director of the Museum, very kindly agreed that the TRC could have any books on textiles and dress in their various series. This amount to 22 titles. This is a very generous gift and one which is greatly appreciated. Many of the books were 2017 TRC Books Showcased.

\*\*\*

## **Hand & Lock "250 Years of Embroidery"**

Gillian Vogelsang-Eastwood,  
11th July 2017

I have just been to the Hand & Lock "250 Years of Embroidery" exhibition at the Bishopsgate's Institute (230 Bishopsgate) in London. It was only on for two days (12th -13th July 2017).

It is a small, intense and thought provoking exhibition that includes a wide range of embroideries from various collections, including the Hand & Lock archives. There are some amazing examples of gold thread embroidery for military and general use, as well as beaded *haute couture* dress and jumpers, and letters and designs associated with the famous of the fashion and film world. There is, for example, a series of handbags made by Hand & Lock and designed by people such as Vivienne Westward. The handbags were auctioned later in the year at Sotheby's with the process going to various charities.

The exhibition includes various themes, such as the history of craftsmanship and working with designers. It includes items from the following, very diverse sources: the Hand & Lock archives, the Diana Springall Collection, the Bishopgate Institute archives, the Lightfoot archive, as well as 'our' TRC Collection (lotus shoes from China, and the 'Bethlehem jacket' with imitation British military decoration; see illustration). The exhibition accompanies a one-day conference (13th July) at the same address about the history of embroidery, past, present and future.

\*

## African Textiles Study Day in Brighton

29<sup>th</sup> September 2017

Gillian Vogelsang-Eastwood

On the 29th September 2017 I attended a one-day meeting on *Fashioning Africa*, which is a project organised by the Royal Pavilion and Museums, Brighton, England. The Project is about looking at, talking about and collecting African fashion, both traditional/classic forms as well as items made by specific fashion designers in various countries, including Ghana and Nigeria.

The meetings were very well attended, with colleagues, students and other interested people from all over Britain (and one from Holland) attending and taking part. There were two sessions, one with lectures and an afternoon session focusing on objects. It was fascinating hearing from the various speakers and how they approached the subject, the question of ethical collecting, and why should a British museum collect African garments? However, the question was turned around by referring to the large Afro-British population here, therefore why would you NOT collect items that represent their cultural background?

The afternoon session was spent looking at various groups of objects and explaining some of the different ways of looking at them, why were they made, what are they saying, etc. Participants moved from one table to another. There were tables with woven, dyed, and embellished forms, and some specialists explaining.

\*\*\*

## Traditional Jewelry & Textiles Fair

4th September 2017

September 2017 saw various volunteers, including Deandra de Looft from the TRC, running a stall about the TRC and its activities at the *Traditional Jewelry & Textiles Fair* in Amsterdam. The fair is now run by Paul Spijker, a long time friend of the TRC and advisor on African textiles.

This fair was a wonderful opportunity for the TRC to talk about its activities to a wider audience of

interested people, especially collectors.

\*\*\*

## Display of garments at the St. Ephrem Monastery, Glane

5th November 2017

The TRC has been helping the St. Ephrem the Syrian Monastery in Glane, The Netherlands, with a display about Bishop Mor Julius Yeshù Çiçek, who died in 2007. One of the reasons was to help with a display about the previous bishop, including some of his garments and his writing set (he was a noted calligrapher). The display opened on the 5th November 2017. In addition the TRC is going to help write a booklet about Syriac Orthodox monastic and priestly vestments.



*Display of clothing and objects associated with Bishop Mor Julius Yeshù Çiçek. 5th Nov. 2017.  
Photograph by Gewargis Acis.*

Two showcases for the display were donated by the Volkenkunde Museum, Leiden.

\*\*\*

The *Stichting* TRC will be happy to answer any questions that readers may have about our work. In addition, gifts of clothing, books and visual material are always welcome! And anyone wishing to help financially or take part in the activities of the *Stichting* should contact us at:

Textile Research Centre  
Hogewoerd 164, 2311 HW Leiden  
The Netherlands  
071-5134144 06-28830428