

Textile Research Centre, Leiden

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The New Year is with us again and the TRC is looking forward to a wide range of activities and events. Three new exhibitions are being planned: a) looking at textiles and clothing from Africa (see below); b) handlooms and related items from around the world, to coincide with the Week of the Weaver (May 2014), and c) a first for the TRC, an exhibition set up by a group of Dutch lace makers (*Experikant*), who have been exploring the TRC's depot and who are going to present their interpretations and inspirations. In addition, there are going to be various workshops on textiles and, more particularly, gold thread embroidery. Not to mention the daily activities, weekly guided tours of exhibitions, open days, and the many visitors who come and see the exhibitions and browse the TRC shop.



Detail from dress with an image of Africa in batik.
TRC collection.

TRC's New Exhibition: *Silhouette of Africa* (5th February - 15th May 2014)

The vast continent of Africa is home to a wide range of cultural and ethnic groups, many of whom have their own styles of traditional textiles and garments. For thousands of years these have been used to identify the group and as an important means of indicating a person's social and economic status, and their role within such a particular group. But these textiles also reflect ideas about colour, patterns and iconography, as well as religion and spirituality.

The aim of this exhibition is to give a feel for this diversity by focussing on various types of garments and textiles from various parts of sub-Saharan Africa. In doing so, emphasis is placed on types of fibres used for specific garments; on some specific dyeing techniques, and on some of the silhouettes created by the garments and outfits worn by both men and women. Overall, many changes in the use of local and imported textiles have taken place in the 20th and early 21st centuries, and these are reflected in the garments. As a result, there have been some dramatic changes in the fibres used, the dyeing techniques, and the silhouette of Africa and Africans.



The exhibition is co-produced with Paul Spijker (Toguna Art), a specialist in African textiles and artifacts.

Workshop: Gold Thread Embroidery 7th March 2014

One of the more intriguing and spectacular forms of embroidery is that which uses gold and silver threads. This technique has been used in different forms, from Japan to Europe, for hundreds of years. In Europe it is particularly known for its use for festive and ecclesiastical garments. In the Middle East it is often associated with women's clothing.

The workshop, on **Friday 7th March 2014**, lasts from 09.30 until 12.00, and will be repeated in the afternoon from 13.00 until 15.30. Per workshop, the maximum number of participants is eight. During the workshop, the participants, who do not need any prior knowledge or experience of embroidering, will be assisted in embroidering a floral sprig inspired by an early 20th century Greek dress now in the TRC collection.

The venue of the workshop is the TRC, Hogewoerd 164, Leiden. The instructor is Ms Ulrike Mullners, a professional embroideress. Depending on the demands of the participants, instruction will be given in English or Dutch. Fees, including materials, are 45 euros, to be paid in advance after receiving confirmation and an invoice. If you are interested to participate, please contact the TRC: info@trc-leiden.nl

Five-Day Intensive Textile Courses

Between Monday 17th and Friday 21st of March, 2014, the TRC organises, for the eighth time, its very well-received five-day intensive course about textiles and all that goes with them. The course, which is being taught in English, looks at the processes of making a piece of cloth, from the raw fibres to the end product. The participants will learn about the theory and practice of fibre identification, spinning, dyeing, weaving, and decorative techniques including printing and embroidery. The course is practically orientated and the students are encouraged to try out the wide range of techniques that are being discussed. This means that they will use microscopes and staining techniques for fibre identification. They are introduced, and asked to use, a wide variety of hand spindles and spinning wheels. They also apply natural dye stuffs and mordants to produce dozens of different colours. Students may bring pieces of textiles that they would like to discuss during the course.

This five-day course has in the past already attracted students from around the world. The course is given by Dr. Gillian Vogelsang-Eastwood (PhD Manchester, UK), director TRC. The fees for a full week of tuition are 500 euros. The group of students is always limited to eight people, in order to ensure the greatest benefits to the participants.

For the March 2014 course there are two places left. The course will be repeated from 12th to 16th May 2014 and from 13th -17th October 2014. Please let us know as soon as possible whether you want to join. Contact us at info@trc-leiden.nl

Three-Day TRC Course: Basic Middle Eastern and Central Asian embroidery techniques and identification 20th -22nd June 2014

Most people have heard of embroidery, especially cross stitch samplers. However, the history of embroidery is much more complex than the cross stitch. For the purpose of this course, embroidery is defined as the art of decorating a piece of cloth, whereby a needle and thread are an essential, but not necessarily the only elements used to create a design or pattern. This means that stitching and other techniques, such as appliqué and patchwork, also come under the umbrella term of embroidery.



Detail of heavily embroidered, woman's trouser cuffs, Oman. TRC collection.

The course, given in English, will look at the general history of embroidery and embroidery techniques, with an emphasis on Middle Eastern and Central Asian forms. The TRC's extensive collection of embroidery will be used to illustrate the various forms discussed. Stereoscopic microscopes will be available for the participants to use for the identification of embroidery techniques during the period of the course. Each day will include practical elements to illustrate

the various points discussed. Participants are encouraged, if they so wish, to bring examples of embroidery with them for identification and discussion purposes.

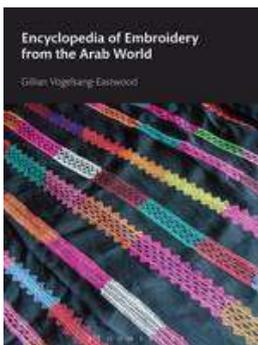
Fees for the full three day course are 350 euros. The maximum number of participants is eight, and to date five places have already been reserved. If you want to participate, please contact us at info@trc-leiden.nl

Workshop: Gold thread embroidery from the Middle East and Central Asia, 23rd June 2014

Following a previous workshop on 7th March, another workshop on gold thread embroidery is organised on Monday 23rd June, but this time with special attention to embroidery forms from the Middle East and Central Asia, and immediately following a three-day course on embroidery. The instructor, Ms Ulrike Mullner, will discuss the various techniques that are and have been used in this vast region, and illustrate her talk with examples from the TRC collection. Participants, who do not need any knowledge or previous practical experience, are encouraged during the workshop to try out the various techniques.

The costs for this workshop, which lasts from 09.00-16.00, are 110 euros, including materials. Language of instruction is English. The location is the TRC, Hogewoerd 164, Leiden. Those who are interested to participate are asked to contact the TRC, info@trc-leiden.nl. Fees should be paid in advance after receipt of confirmation and an invoice.

Encyclopedia of Embroidery from the Arab World



A long term project of the TRC to record the various forms of hand embroidery to be found in North Africa and the Middle East is nearly completed. The manuscript of the encyclopedia has gone to the publishers (Bloomsbury Academic, London). It has been a mammoth task to research and write the book, but thanks to many specialists throughout the world and in the Middle East in particular we have got there. The book will be available to the general public at the beginning of 2015. It will be about 500 pages long and illustrated with many colour and black/white images. ISBN:978-0857853974

Digital Encyclopaedia of Decorative Needlework

As a continuation of the *Encyclopedia of Embroidery from the Arab World*, a team from the TRC is now working on a digital encyclopaedia of decorative needlework. In its final form, this will include about 2500 entries about embroidery and related forms from prehistoric times to the present day and from around the world.

TRC's Library and Recommended Books

One of the important TRC facilities is its library. It contains a wide range of books in various languages about many aspects of textiles, dress and accessories from around the world. The library includes a range of anthropological, archaeological, historical, practical, as well as fashion books and books on modern dress theory.

We are always interested in getting new or used books about textiles, clothing, accessories and so forth. Please contact us at info@trc-leiden.nl if you have items that you would like to donate. Let's make the TRC library a superb facility for all textile lovers! Please note that the books in the library are for use at the TRC, so we cannot lend out books.

The last few months have seen a number of books relating to the theme of textiles and dress (in the broadest sense of these words) being accessioned into the TRC library. As noted in December 2013, accessioned books that have been published within the last 10 years are going to be listed with a general description and a recommendation as to whom the book is suitable for. The TRC now has a team of readers who are preparing suitable entries and every two months this list will be updated. The December 2013 and the February 2014 lists are available on the TRC website.

HALI

In an earlier Newsletter we mentioned that there was going to be further co-operation between the internationally recognised carpet and textile journal HALI (London) and the TRC. Just recently, HALI very kindly sent us a large number of back numbers of the HALI journal for the TRC library.

TRC and Facebook

Thanks to the efforts of Shelley Anderson and Sergio Klok (Charity Events, Leiden) interest in the TRC on Facebook is growing rapidly and every week brings more and more subscribers to the TRC Facebook page (Textile Research Centre Leiden). 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. Please 'like' this site and be regularly updated with news about the TRC.

Angels Needed!

The TRC's depot is getting very full thanks to numerous donations. Literally every week we are given items for the collection. We are thankful to everyone who thinks about us. But it is giving us a luxury problem: We are running out of space! We are a victim of our own success. Yet, all donations of clothing and textiles will be considered for inclusion in the collection!

Next to that, the TRC needs financial sponsors (commercial or private) who understand the fascination of textiles and clothing and can see the TRC as a means of preserving and promoting textiles! Please bear in mind that the TRC is officially recognised by the Dutch tax authorities as a 'cultural' ANBI, and gifts to the TRC are therefore highly beneficial for the donor.

Some Recent Donations

It was clear at the beginning of January that many people were tidying up their homes, as on each day for the first two weeks of the month donations came in for the TRC collection! These included various collections of samplers made in the 1900-1920 period by Dutch schoolgirls. It is interesting to see how they were taught and the levels they achieved. It is also very nice to have names and in some cases photographs of the girls, as the story behind the object is often as important as the objects themselves. Another gift in early January was a collection of textiles from Indonesia and dating to the early part of the 20th century. These pieces come from various islands and are decorated in woven, ikat and batik techniques. They are of a very high quality and their condition is amazing. The gift also included some ikats from Ecuador. These textiles belonged to the Dozy family, who had given items to the TRC earlier.

As an intriguing detail, a direct ancestor of the current Dozy family, Prof. Reinhart Dozy (Leiden University), published in 1848 the first dictionary of Arab clothing! A work that the TRC is planning to update in cooperation with various academic bodies in the Middle East. More details about this project in a future issue of the TRC newsletter.
