

Textile Research Centre Newsletter: Winter 2014/2015

Where has this year gone? We have been so busy with many different activities that the year has just slipped by. And as you will see, more activities are being planned! From new exhibitions to workshops and lectures, as well as increasing the use of various social media. But we do need your help to keep up this range of events.

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Christmas Appeal

With the end of 2014 rapidly approaching, the TRC is organising a large-scale Christmas Appeal to help funding the TRC and its many activities. All the work of the TRC is carried out by volunteers, but we still need financial support for practical matters. We are asking all our friends and those who are interested in the work of the TRC to help us in continuing our work.

Donations can be transferred to **bank account number NL39 INGB 0002 9823 59, Stichting Textile Research Centre, Leiden**, with reference to "TRC Christmas Appeal 2014".

The TRC is a cultural ANBI (*Algemeen Nut Beogende Instelling*), which means that with the introduction of the so-called *Geefwet* per 1 January 2012, donations made to cultural ANBI's, including the TRC, are tax deductible for Dutch tax payers at a very favourable rate, namely for 125%. Any financial support given to the TRC in 2014 you can simply include in your tax forms as a gift to a 'Cultural' ANBI, and will be automatically rated at 125%. It is very simple!

Financial support means that you and other textile enthusiasts can enjoy more and more exhibitions, courses, lectures and workshops at the TRC, as well as use our facilities, such as the collection, library, shop, and not forgetting the all essential tea/coffee and biscuits.

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Party time at the TRC!

On Monday, 5th January the TRC's new exhibition about appliqué panels from the Street of the Tentmakers (see below) will be made open to the general public. The exhibition will be officially opened on Sunday, 4th January, by Dr. Rudulf de Jong, the director of the *Nederlands-Vlaams Instituut* in Cairo (NVIK). He and the Institute have been supporting the Street in the form of an exhibition as well as workshops at the Institute.

To celebrate the New Year and the new exhibition we have decided to do something a little different this time. So we are going to have a party at the TRC Gallery with a Middle Eastern

theme. Everyone is welcome, even more so if you bring some Middle Eastern food with you to share around!

We will be open from about 16.30 onwards, with the official opening at 17.00. Food and drinks will be available from about 17.30 onwards (to give people a chance to see the exhibition).

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Textile Visions Of Egypt: **Appliqué panels from the Street of the Tentmakers, Cairo** **TRC Gallery exhibition. 5th January - 30th April 2015**

One of the joys of walking around the bazaars of Cairo is a visit to the Street of the Tentmakers. It is a 17th century complex of buildings, with a long street with shops filled with appliqué panels of the most amazing range of colours and designs. The appliqués from the Street are part of a tradition that goes back to at least the time of the ancient Egyptian pharaoh, Tutankhamun (died 1323 BC).

An appliqué text in the form of a pear (Ottoman style calligraphy; 2013 panel from the Street of the Tentmakers, Cairo; TRC collection).



The new TRC exhibition includes historical and technical information as well as a very wide range of panels with traditional geometric designs, intricate Arabic calligraphy, ancient Egyptian tomb scenes, modern lotus designs, as well as birds, fishes, landscapes and folk stories. In fact, all aspects of traditional Egyptian life.

The exhibition at the TRC has been made possible with the help of the appliqué makers from the Street of the Tentmakers, Cairo.

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Wednesday Workshops

The TRC has been experimenting with various types of workshops and we have found that having a 3-hour meeting work best for us and our guests, with a lecture or talk followed by a practical part in which the participants are actually made to work themselves. We have just had a double workshop on the Bayeux Tapestry that was given by Prof. Gale Owen-Crocker (and during which the participants all tried out some Bayeux stitches) and another workshop took place on 26

November, which was about the range of beadwork and embroideries found in the tomb of the Egyptian Pharaoh, Tutankhamun. It was given by Dr. Gillian Vogelsang-Eastwood.

So from January 2015 onwards, on the last Wednesday of every month, there will be a Wednesday Workshop. These will cover a wide range of subjects – from Egyptian appliqué work, medieval garments from Leiden, wearing Japanese kimonos, to Strait Chinese beadwork. The speakers will all be people with experience in both the work style and the historical background of the subject. A list of subjects will be available shortly, but the first workshop of the year, will be on the 28th January and will be about the TRC's exhibition on the Street of the Tentmakers and appliqué in Egypt in general.

All of the workshops will be c. 25 euros in price (including basic materials, biscuits, coffee/tea) and held from 10.00 until 13.00. There will be a maximum of 15 participants in each workshop.

If you have suggestions for other workshops please let us know at info@trc-leiden.nl

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Five-Day TRC Intensive Textile Courses, 16-20 March

Between 16 and 20 March, 2015, the TRC will again present its acclaimed five-day intensive course on textiles and textile production. The course, which is being given in English, looks at the processes of making a piece of cloth, from the raw fibres to the end product. The participants 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.



The course is given by Dr. Gillian Vogelsang-Eastwood (PhD Manchester, UK), director TRC. It will be repeated **between 18-22 May 2015**. The fees for a full week of tuition are 550 euros. The group of students is always limited to eight people, in order to ensure the greatest benefits to the participants.

Those who are interested, please register at info@trc-leiden.nl

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TRC NEEDLES: the new digital encyclopaedia of decorative needlework

On-line at the end of November!

For thousands of years men and women have made, worn, traded, and admired various forms of decorative needlework, from small daintily embroidered handkerchiefs to giant gold embroidered texts that bedeck the *kiswah* in Mecca. Decorative needlework was and remains a feature of life throughout the world.

Appliqué panel with a geometric lotus design (2013 Street of the Tentmakers, Cairo; TRC collection).



The TRC is currently engaged in the setting up and writing of a digital encyclopaedia called *TRC Needles*, that covers this enormous field of human creativity, focussing in particular on appliqué, beading, darned knotting, embroidery, needle lace making, passementerie, patchwork and quilting. The encyclopaedia includes data about different forms from all over the world, from the Americas to Asia. It looks at the earliest surviving examples from ancient Egypt to present-day forms, with an emphasis on handmade examples rather than industrially produced items.

It includes references to tools and materials, to iconography, the uses of decorative needlework, to influential people and makers, historical examples, relevant institutions, paintings or similar imagery that depicts decorative needlework. The encyclopaedia also discusses relevant references in various forms of literature, as well as relevant details relating to economic and social history.

TRC Needles will come on-line at the end of November 2014 with an initial c. 800 entries and cross-references. It will be increased every month by c. 50 entries until the goal of 4,000 entries has been reached. This is a four, possibly five- year project that is being carried out by a dedicated (and at times fanatic) group of TRC volunteers and colleagues in museums and universities throughout the world.

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TRC Facebook, Textile Moments, Pinterest and Twitter

Contrary to some people's thoughts about the TRC we do know about 21st century social media and not only know about it, we are actively using it!

The TRC has a blog on its main site (to be found under *Inspiration: Textile Moments*), which is used for those textile WOW moments or just to share some thoughts and experiences.

Thanks to the hard work of Shelley (TRC volunteer), the TRC Facebook page is very active with weekly updates about TRC events and interesting textile 'things.' We now have over 500 'likes' and the number is increasing at a most satisfactory pace, so if you have not yet 'liked' us yet, please do!

A recent accession to the TRC collection. One of four, small embroidered pads (with accompanying box) that were used by a Dutch bride and groom in 1827 – it can also be seen on the TRC Facebook.

Roos (Dutch for Rose; another TRC volunteer) is developing the TRC's *Pinterest* page and *Twitter*. *Pinterest* features images of textiles and garments from the TRC's collection, while the *Twitter* feature gives short texted information about latest events, and so forth. Please feel free to sign on to either of these initiatives.

We are thinking about starting up a YouTube channel where interesting videos (max. 10 minutes) can be found about various textile techniques, as well as information about the wide world of clothing and accessories. More details about the TRC Channel will be presented in forthcoming TRC Newsletters.

