

**TEXTILE RESEARCH CENTRE
LEIDEN**

**DIRECTOR'S ANNUAL
REPORT
FOR THE YEAR 2021**

The TRC is 30 years young!



*Embroidered postcard from France, early 20th century
([TRC 2015.0435](#)).*

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2021 and the TRC Leiden

2021 was such a strange year, open, shut, open, postpone, expand, talk, share, mutter mightily, people going into quarantine, and making plans for the future. It has all been happening, sometimes everything at the same time or so it has felt! I have been asked on various occasions ‘What word characterises the TRC?’ After 2020 and 2021 and Covid it's simple: ‘flexibility’, the ability to change and adapt to changing circumstances, to greet visitors, photograph textiles, discuss ongoing research, and wash the tea and coffee cups, while enjoying what we are doing and why. 2021 has shown that flexibility at all levels is essential!



Embroidered panel with flowers, birds, and animals, South Africa, early 21st century ([TRC 2021.0189](#)).

We have been fortunate that there have been several, very generous donations that have meant the TRC Leiden not only survived 2020 and 2021 and all the havoc caused by the various waves of the Covid19 virus, but unexpectedly we have actually thrived. The closures have meant we have had time to work on the collection, including cataloguing, photography and putting objects away. In 2021, for example, a total of 4259 items were added to the collection. As a result there are now nearly 37,000 items online and open to everyone to learn from and be inspired by.

The work of the depot staff is getting harder and busier, especially and not so surprisingly,

because we are rapidly running out of space and face various decisions about the nature and the potential future of the Collection! We keep stressing that the TRC Collection reflects a myriad of textile techniques, which is used for its many educational responsibilities.

The TRC Blogs have proved especially popular in 2021 and were being put online every few days. These have been written by various TRC members and as a result the blogs cover a very diverse range of technical, design, historical, social, political and historical subjects. One thing we have learnt over the last twelve months is that keeping in touch via the internet has and is proving to be very important for everybody concerned.

Significantly, 2021 saw a sea change taking place as more and more people wanted to know about textiles, artisanship and skills. In response, we were able to run workshops on diverse themes such as pre-industrial sewing and Jordanian embroidery and sprang, not to mention presenting a new series of workshops on bobbin lace making. Many more workshops are being organised in 2022.

The TRC Leiden is 30 years young!

Thirty years ago, on 19th December 1991, the Textile Research Centre (TRC), Leiden, was officially established as a *Stichting* (Foundation) under Dutch law.

We had planned to have a party since we felt that this significant milestone should be noted and celebrated, but due to the corona crisis, this had to be postponed.

From the beginning the TRC has been an educational centre with an emphasis on the passing on of knowledge about textile techniques and the concept of dress identity. Throughout the years we have stressed the importance of textile crafts and artisanship. We have also been involved with

people from many different cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Our extensive collection from around the world and from all ages is continually used in the many workshops and courses that the TRC is organising. Textiles should not only be seen, but also be touched, smelled and even listened to!

The creation of the TRC in 1991 was actively supported by the National Museum of Ethnology (RMV) and the National Museum of Antiquities (ROM), both in Leiden. In fact we were generously housed in the Ethnology Museum between 1991 and 2009, when we decided it was time to move to new premises. These were found in the middle of the old city, at the Hogewoerd 164. A wonderful place that has given us time to breath, think and yes, expand, and which has become a true beehive of activities, and, in the words of one of our recent visitors, a textile *valhalla*.

Many thanks to all of you who have supported us over the last thirty years. And now it is time to find new premises and support for the next thirty plus years!

Gillian Vogelsang-Eastwood, Director TRC

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, and their presentation to a general public. The most important part of our work is the building up and study of a textile and dress collection. These garments are available for teaching, research and exhibition purposes.

The Board

Per 1 January 2020 the board is made up of the following:

Chairman: Prof. Bas ter Haar Romeny

Treasurer: Prof. Olaf Kaper

Secretary: Dr. Karel Innemée

General board members: Prof. Lammert Leertouwer, Mrs. V. Drabbe and Dr. Gillian Vogelsang-Eastwood (Director).

International Advisory Board

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

Permanent staff and volunteers

Dr. Gillian Vogelsang-Eastwood continues as the director of the TRC. She is a specialist in embroidery and Middle Eastern textiles and dress. For 2021, the volunteers include: Shelley Anderson, Beverley Bennett, Susan Cave, Augusta de Gunzburg, Rebecca Hix, Naoko Kikuchi, Renske Langendijk, Olga Ieromina, Loren Mealey, Francesco Montuori, Sophie Muter, Marieke Roosenboom, Erika Riccobon, AJ Salter, Kaja Sobczyk, Joshua Verkerk and Karin Winkel.

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The TRC is a Cultural ANBI

From 2013 the TRC is recognised as a cultural ANBI ("Culturele ANBI"). It means that individual gifts by Dutch citizens are tax deductible for 125% for a private person and 150% for a company.

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501(c)(3)

For many of us, the code 501(c)(3) means nothing, but in the USA it is very important. It means that financial and object donations to a registered charity can be tax deductible for American tax payers.



From May 2019, the Textile Research Centre, Leiden (TRC Leiden) and the *Tracing Patterns Foundation*, Berkeley (TPF) are working together to raise funds among American citizens for textile studies and textile craftspeople worldwide

The Tracing Patterns Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit cultural organisation based in California and headed by textile scholar and curator, Dr. Sandra Sardjono. All financial and object donations to the TRC made through the TPF are tax deductible for US tax payers. With this wonderful partnership, American donors are now able to support the TRC Leiden in two main ways:

- US-based donors may donate via the TPF: the relevant donation forms can be found [here](#). Go to 'Designations' where you will find the name of the TRC
- Donations of actual objects through the Tracing Patterns Foundation, and with 501(c)(3), must be pre-arranged through the TRC Leiden (info@trc-leiden.nl).

2021 saw the donation of a wide range of embroidered and woven garments from Mexico and Guatemala as a result of this arrangement. We would particularly like to thank Charles and Carolyn Knobler for their generosity.

The 501(c)(3) status has also seen a number of financial donations to the TRC, especially as part of the crowd funding activities in November (see below). Again, we really appreciate the generosity of these donors, especially given the strange times we live in.

The TRC Brochure: Current Status and Future Ambitions

In October 2021 the TRC Leiden produced a brochure that explains its past, its present and indeed its future ambitions. A PDF-copy of the brochure can be downloaded [here](#). The main objective of the brochure is to draw attention to the significance of the TRC for the promotion and teaching of textile artisanship, the protection and highlighting of cultural heritage, and in general as a knowledge centre for textiles and dress.

The brochure stresses the need for more sustainable financial support and, last but not least, the urgent need for larger premises.

An actual version of the brochure can be obtained at the TRC Leiden, Hogewoerd 164, 2311 HW Leiden.

TRC Gallery

The TRC Gallery is used to hold temporary exhibitions about textiles and dress. Access to the exhibitions is free of charge.

In 2021, two events were held in the TRC Gallery, namely one about the Paisley motif, and a combination of small mini-exhibitions.

Further details about these and other exhibitions can be found below.

The TRC Shop

The TRC Shop occupies a small area at the rear of the Gallery. It is not the main business of the TRC, but allows us to sell items that would either not be suitable to keep in the main collection or are duplicates of items we already hold.

Due to the Corona crisis the TRC Shop has not been as well visited as we would have liked. But this has not prevented Beverley Bennet, who runs the shop, from producing beautifully made bags, pictures, lavender sachets, etc., for sale. These will be available for the general public when we re-open in 2022.

The TRC and online activities

The Stichting has its own [website](#), which was designed and is being maintained by Joost Kolkman and in doing so he is supported by Coen van der Geest. 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, short items of current interest, the library catalogue, the objects catalogue, TRC Needles, the TRC Blogs, etc. The website information is usually given in both Dutch and English.

The website is kept up-to-date by Willem Vogelsang who throughout 2021 has been continually adding new items, removing old items and working on the TRC's large digital project [TRC Needles](#) (see below).

TRC Collection: Work is progressing on bringing the [TRC Collection fully online](#). By December 2021, over 37000 objects were

included in the catalogue, and the vast majority of them have been described and photographed. It is taking us a little longer than anticipated, but the database is already proving to be an asset to everyone concerned.

TRC Library: Thanks to the hard work of the library team, the [TRC Library catalogue](#) went online in August 2015. By late December 2021, well over 5000 titles are included in the library catalogue, with cross-references, book reviews and recommendations. The library team has worked very hard getting this all ready and the list of books in the collection is being updated on a regular basis (more details are given below about the Library). See more below.

TRC Images: We now have another group working on *TRC Images*, which is a much smaller database that includes the TRC collection of images (postcards, photographs, even stamps) relating to textiles and costume from around the world. If you have any suitable items that 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 been online for just over some three years. *Needles* currently includes nearly 3000 entries and more and more information and partners are agreeing to help with the entries and providing information and/or photographs. We range from the modern stitch poetry of Janet M. McDonald Davies (New Zealand) to early archaeological finds of embroidery from China.

TRC and online presence

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. By the end of 2021 there were more than 13000 followers of TRC Facebook. 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.

During 2021, Shelley Anderson also ran Pinterest for the TRC. Pinterest features images of textiles and garments from the TRC's collection and activities.

In 2021 several TRC volunteers started a TRC Instagram page and we are now followed by about 7000 people. This page is designed to show TRC objects with very short stories.

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TRC Blog: Textile Moments

The TRC has its own [blog page](#) called *Textile Moments*, or more commonly the TRC Blog. This page is used by members of the TRC or indeed anyone else, who has a story to tell about textiles, clothing, exhibitions, pictures, and so forth. Some of the items given later in this report are based on blogs published in 2021.

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Crowdfunding and two textile donations that change the face of the TRC (and Leiden)

In 2021 the TRC was offered two impressive and fascinating collections of Central European and Balkan textiles, clothing and jewellery, as well as items from other parts of the world, including Afghanistan and Central Asia, Georgia, Japan, Palestine, Syria, and America. The last include a group of beautiful Middle American blouses with reverse appliqué (*mola*), not to mention 36 traditional American quilts! Both of these collections will arrive in 2022.



A small part of the collection of Central and Southeast European garments, donated to the TRC, now still in Paris.

But what are these textiles and garments and why do we want them? One of the collections is in Paris and consists of nearly 600 items, mainly Hungarian and Romanian textiles and garments.

The other collection is in Arizona, USA, and includes just over 1000 items, with many textiles from Albania in southeastern Europe and Georgia in the Caucasus. It also includes a small library of relevant books. These two collections complement each other and fill significant gaps in the existing TRC Collection.

In consultation with various interested parties, including Yvonne van Delft, *Wethouder Cultuur*, Leiden and colleagues at Leiden University, the TRC agreed to accept these items.

The addition of these pieces to the already existing collection of over 37000 pieces, will mean that the TRC and Leiden will have a unique textiles and dress collection that will be one of the best in Europe and reflect many different textile techniques and garment forms.

This amazing resource is open to the general public for educational, research, display and inspirational purposes, as well as supporting the concept of Leiden as *Textielstad* ('City of

Textiles') and Leiden *Stad van Kennis* ('City of Knowledge').

Crowdfunding

Inevitably there were costs involved in transporting, cataloguing and storing these items. So in November 2021 we decided to start a crowdfunding action to raise a minimum of 5700 euros for the basic costs. Any more would go towards racks and shelves, new cameras, a new deep freezer that goes to -35 centigrade, and about 400 acid-free storage boxes, not to mention a mountain of acid-free paper, etc.

The action was carried out via *VoordeKunst*, directly to the TRC bank account via *IDeal* and for American donors using the 501(c)(3) system for tax deductions, via 'The Tracing Pattern Foundation' in Berkeley.

Thanks to everyone's help we raised 18,500 euros within four weeks!

The Library

Over the years the TRC has built up a collection of over 5000 registered books relating to textiles and dress. Thanks to the generosity of people there are about another 1,000 books that need to be registered.

Many of these books were catalogued in 2021 thanks to the efforts of various volunteers, especially Marieke Roozeboom, Karin Winkel and Willem Vogelsang.

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
- Dutch regional

Donation of a 17th century pattern book

Karin Winkel



Frontispiece of Paulus Fürst's embroidery model book, with five women in a domestic scene with two men spying upon them.

In 2021 the TRC Library received a special gift from Sytske Wijnsma in the small town of Wormer, in the northwest of the Netherlands, who on previous occasions has given other items to the TRC ([click here](#)).



One of the charts in Paulus Fürst's embroidery model book (1666), showing a design suited for needlelace and/or reticella.

The donation is that of an original, 17th century pattern book that was specifically published for embroideresses, and it contains embroidery charts that were designed by a woman who is named in the text. The frontispiece of the booklet (see illustration above) also has a distinctly 'feminine touch', showing a domestic scene with five women doing their needlework, and who are being

spied upon by two men, one of them half hiding behind the curtains.

SELVEDGE at the TRC in Leiden



For several years the London-based textile organisation *SELVEDGE* and the TRC Leiden have been working together on various projects, including the writing of articles, book and exhibition reviews, and the organisation of international events (such as *SELVEDGE FAIRS*).

In addition, there have been various discussions with Polly Leonard, the founder and chief editor of *SELVEDGE*, about how they can actively support the TRC in its plans for establishing a textile artisan centre in Leiden.

So we are very pleased to announce that *SELVEDGE* has very kindly given a complete set of the *SELVEDGE* magazine, which is published six times per year, to the TRC Library, starting from 2004 to the present day. This is a very welcome addition to the library as the magazine contains many interesting articles, suggestions and hints at future trends within the world of artisan textiles and clothing.

More details about *SELVEDGE* can be found at their website called *Selvedge. The fabric of your life*, which includes announcements for various events, the catalogue of their online shop, and references to their journal, blogs, podcasts, competitions, craft projects, etc.

For more details about the *SELVEDGE* magazine, or indeed any other *SELVEDGE* activity, please contact them at [this email address](#).

Once again, many thanks to *SELVEDGE* for this generous gift and their support of the TRC in Leiden.

Lace reference collection



Bobbin lace pillow, late 20th century, the Netherlands (TRC 2017.0208).

The TRC is building up a lace collection, which includes a wide variety of hand made laces, as well as machine laces.

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

The plans for 'Lace in Leiden' was given a boost in 2021 thanks to the donation of a large collection of lace equipment and books. The collection was used by the late Mrs Nettie Wetzels, from Berkel en Rodenrijs, who was a dedicated lace maker for about fifty years, as well as a teacher of lace making for many years.

The donation includes many lace pillows of different types, and the family felt that these objects, together with literally thousands of wooden bobbins, pins, threads, etc., would find a good home at the TRC and more

importantly, they would be used. Many of the bobbins and some of the pillows, stands and bags were made by Mr Wetzels, who was a professional bookbinder and very skilled in designing and making the tools and equipment Mrs Wetzels needed. Many of these items will be used by the TRC for teaching purposes and some items will be sold in the two-day textile fair we are planning for the summer of 2022.

In addition to the equipment, there are over 200 lace books in various languages, reflecting lace forms and techniques from many countries. The books fall into three main groups, (a) dictionaries and lexicons, (b) lace techniques (mainly bobbin lace) and (c) the history of lace.

In order to accommodate these and other book donations, we have bought new bookcases for the library, although it will take some time before the books are sorted and catalogued. The donation of these books, that will fill gaps in the current TRC collection of lace books, means that the TRC has an extensive lace library. All in all an impressive and important donation!

Textile Artisan Centre

One of the plans of the TRC is to formally establish a artisan centre that will teach a wide range of hand textile techniques and their context. We are already working with Dutch groups to develop this idea, such as the Crafts Council Netherlands, the Hogeschool Enschede, the Stichting Guney, as well as groups in Denmark, Great Britain and Germany. We have contacted a number of teachers who are prepared to give classes on a range of techniques, including spinning and the making of bobbin lace, Turkish oya, embroidery and weaving with small looms.

The aim is to offer workshops, courses, study days and lectures on a wide range of

techniques and their histories, literally from all over the world, and all of this supported by the TRC collection of textiles and accessories. In order to make our plans a reality, we are actively looking for larger premises in Leiden to house all the TRC facilities and the proposed teaching commitments.

Cooperation agreement TRC with Osnabrück University



Delegation from Osnabrück borrows garments from the TRC for further study by students of Osnabrück University.

For sometime now, Prof. Bärbel Schmidt (Osnabrück University) and the TRC have been talking about some of her BA textile students working together on a collection of Dutch and German regional dress from the TRC Collection. The aim is for the students to help with the identification of the garments, using them as a source of inspiration and then making a booklet and online exhibition about their experience, research and creations. This work is being supported by a grant from the Lower Saxony Ministry for Science and Culture for the development of Dutch-German cultural relationships.

The main problem, however, was the corona crisis, which meant that the students could not come to Leiden to work on a selection of garments. So Prof. Schmidt and her colleague, Lucia Schwalenberg, came to Leiden to discuss the project and to pick out a range of objects that could be borrowed and taken back to Germany for a couple of months. Around the same time, the TRC had an online meeting

with some of the Osnabrück students to discuss the work of the TRC and to explain the project and what was being expected.

Eventually, eight garments of regional dress from Germany and eight pieces from the Netherlands were selected, including caps (for men and women), shawls, bodices, aprons, skirts, etc. These items are examined at the University under the supervision of various staff members. This is an experiment for both institutes, as normally objects do not leave the TRC collection, or in this case the TRC building, unless it is for a loan to another research institute, but given the Corona crisis, flexible solutions had to be found.

Once the students have seen and examined the garments we are expecting them to write a 3,000 word report (in English) that will include a description of the garment, present the research into the garment's context (dress and identity, namely the who and what), and how the garment was used (when and why) and in the next stage, how does the item forms a source of inspiration for a 'modern' textile or garment design (inspiration). Finally, there will be a summary of the whole process and what it meant for the student.

The TRC quilt collection included in the international Quilt Index

Beverley Bennett

Over the last few months the TRC Leiden has been working with *The Quilt Index* (USA) to add the TRC's quilt collection to their website. This work has been carried out by Beverley Bennett, a TRC volunteer and an enthusiastic and very knowledgeable quilter. The following blog was written by Beverley.

The Quilt Index is an open access, digital repository of thousands of images, stories and information about quilts and their makers drawn from hundreds of public and private collections around the world. The Quilt

Index is a digital humanities research and education project of *The Matrix: The Center for Digital Humanities & Social Sciences at Michigan State University*



American quilt with the Cactus Basket pattern, timespan quilt, from late 19th century ([TRC 2018.3127](#)).

There are literally thousands of quilts to be discovered on their website, along with essays, stories, journals, even lesson plans. The Quilt journalist, Meg Cox, has an article on the website titled 'A Journalist's Guide to Getting the Most from the Quilt Index', which I can recommend – you can find it under Resources, then click on 'Essays' and it is the first to appear...or simply [click here](#). Then scroll down the page until you find the Textile Research Centre – the museums are listed in alphabetical order, so you will have to click the 'load more' button several times or, of course, simply [click here](#).

When you open the TRC page, you will find a short description of the TRC and a '[View all records in this project](#)' link, which will take you to the quilts.

In 2021 the TRC had 112 quilts online and I'm sure more will be added in the future. Click on an image to select a quilt, and a photo (which can be enlarged for greater detail) will pop up with a short description. More comprehensive details can be found by selecting 'View Full Record' on the lower right, again with a photo which can be enlarged.

Something to bear in mind when looking at the shorter description is that quilts are usually dated by the last date known, which in the case of *timespan quilts* is the date when it was quilted. A *timespan quilt* is a quilt that is finished many years after it was started. Some of our quilts fit this description, for example, the first quilt on the page, the Airplanes quilt ([TRC 2018.2627](#)), shows a date of 2014 – we know in this case that the quilt top was purchased by a donor and she employed a professional hand quilter to quilt it, so we know the quilting was completed in 2014, and that is the date that appears in the short description.



American quilt with the Bow Tie Chinese Lantern pattern, timespan quilt from second quarter 20th century ([TRC 2019.2040](#)).

We have an appraiser's opinion that the quilt top was made in the 1930-1949 period and so this appears in the longer description and makes this a *timespan quilt*.

We hope you will enjoy seeing the quilts in this format – it means that they can be revisited and viewed many times, not only when we have them in an exhibition. If my experience is any guide then you may well happily lose yourself for several hours exploring this extensive website.

The TRC represented at the quilt show in Rijswijk

Beverley Bennett

From 15-17 October 2021 the TRC had the opportunity to display some of its collection

of feedsack quilts at the Patchwork & Quiltdays, which is held every year at *De Broodfabriek* in Rijswijk, close to The Hague – normally in April, but this year, as with many other events, it had to be rescheduled to October.

On Thursday evening we arrived, along with other exhibitors and quilt shops to set up our wall of seven quilts and a table of original feedsacks, along with a dress to show examples of other things that were made in the 1930s from such sacks. The TRC has published [an online exhibition](#) about these feedsacks and their quilts, but it was great to show the real thing!

The exhibitions were at the back of the hall and on Friday, at opening time, we already had one or two visitors who had rushed past the shops in order not to miss our quilts – we knew then we would be in for a busy time...

The quilts generated a lot of interest – many people had not heard of the feedsack phenomenon in 1930s America and were amazed at the stories and ingenuity involved. One lady recounted how she lived in a baker's shop in the Netherlands during the war and also had items of clothing made from flour sacks, but wished they could have been printed with pretty designs like those on display.



Double Wedding Ring quilt, USA, 1930s ([TRC 2018.2408](#)).

Some young quilters, who were engaged in upcycling, were fascinated by the possibilities presented by the sacks, whilst other quilters were entranced by the hand stitching, colour combinations and patterns that have stood the test of time and are still being used today.

Our Double Wedding Ring quilt caused some to comment on how modern it looked with its striking and unusual design, which is a little different to the usual Double Wedding Ring shapes that are widely known.

The Rail Fence quilt also caused much discussion with its 4,320 pieces and a 'humility' block that was mistakenly pieced the wrong way round – or was it deliberate?

We provided some free templates for one of the more complex quilt blocks – the Star Dahlia. This was very popular and created lots of discussion about modern day techniques compared to those used in our 1930s versions.



Three generations of quilters at the TRC display of quilts in Rijswijk, the Netherlands, October 2021.

Our last visitors to the quilts on Sunday afternoon were a lovely family of three generations of quilters, all equally enthusiastic about our quilts and all currently engaged in making a multi-generational quilt, which is another wonderful quilt tradition. By

then it was time to take the quilts down, and we were footsore and almost hoarse from talking to so many people, a good number of whom live in Leiden and may soon be visiting the TRC (again) to see the quilts and other textiles.

National meeting of lace makers at the TRC in Leiden

On Saturday the 23rd October 2021 we were the venue for a meeting of OIDFA (*Organisation Internationale de la Dentelle au Fuseau et à l'Aiguille*) the Netherlands, an international lace making group.



Early 20th century example of linen bobbin lace ([TRC 2021.2961](#)).

The day started with a welcome by Gon Homburg who had organised the day. She gave a short introduction about the TRC and OIDFA. This was followed by a longer talk about the TRC Leiden by Gillian Vogelsang and a visit to the depot. Emphasis was placed on the general work of the TRC.



Inspecting a lace cap from the TRC collection.

There was then a guided tour of the TRC's **current exhibition** about the paisley/buteh motif. Lots of questions and inspiration! Several of the lace makers were wearing paisley shawls, while one of them had brought a sample book of lace she had made, and all the pieces were paisley motifs in various sizes and degrees of complexity!

After lunch there was a presentation by Olga Ierimina, a TRC volunteer and specialist in bobbin laces. She has given several courses and workshops on the theme of lace identification and the difference between hand-made and machine made forms that resulted in an **online exhibition**.



From left to right: Gillian Vogelsang, Gon Homburg and Olga Ierimina.

Her talk was about her life as a lace maker, how she became involved with lace while in Ukraine and in Russia. Later when she came to the Netherlands, lace making was an important way of getting in contact with people. The Corona period meant lace was even more important for her, although she missed direct contact with other lace makers. The second half of her talk was about the TRC collection of lace, what it consists of, and the diverse nature of the collection (bobbin, needle, knitted, crocheted, tatted, and netted forms).

Afterwards we moved the chairs from straight lines to a circle, and had an enthusiastic brainstorming session to discuss how we can

work together to improve the TRC lace holdings and in particular how to build up an extensive reference collection of both hand and machine forms, and more significantly, how we can work together to make more people aware of lace and to increase the opportunities to learn about diverse forms of lace making techniques.

Various people made suggestions about workshops and courses, such as courses on non-West European forms, a workshop on knitted laces, and more lace identification study days. We also want a study day on the identification of the lace used for Dutch lace caps, and lace caps in general.

We have offered the TRC as an easily accessible venue for various meetings, always within a few metres from the TRC depot and its huge textile collection, including many forms of lace from all over the world.

TRC Gallery Exhibitions

At the beginning of 2021 we had been planning about having two, possibly three TRC Gallery exhibitions in order to attract more visitors and to showcase the diversity and depth of the TRC Collection. However these plans did not materialise, but we did present a major exhibition about the *buteh* motif that is more widely known in the West as the paisley motif.

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Paisley exhibition at the TRC in Leiden

On Tuesday 2nd February 2021, the Dutch government announced that the corona virus lockdown in the Netherlands would continue until the 2nd March. So it was decided that the TRC's Paisley exhibition would open on the 3rd March.



From Buteh to Paisley: The Story of a Global Icon A. TRC exhibition.

The exhibition was about the history of the paisley motif and called *From Buteh to Paisley: The Story of a Global Icon*. It was not the story of the Paisley shawl, but something much, much bigger. The paisley motif is actually one of the few non-geometric design forms that can be found throughout the world. It is worn by men, women, and children of all ages, literally from the cradle to the grave.



From Buteh to Paisley: The Story of a Global Icon. A TRC exhibition.

Moreover, it is worn by people of many different ethnic and cultural backgrounds. It is also one of the very few motifs that are used to decorate garments ranging from underwear (male and female), through stockings, ties and blouses, to skirts, trousers, bikinis and beach hats. It can also be found on the attire worn by a Hell's Angel biker, a Los Angeles gang member, a Steampunk Goth, to a respectable

London banker and a granny who is knitting socks for the grandchildren, all without any comments being made.



From Buteh to Paisley: The Story of a Global Icon. A TRC exhibition.

The exhibition included a wide range of textiles and garments from Iran, India, Japan, Indonesia, Africa as well as Europe, literally from Estonia to Italy, via Britain and Russia. There were also many printed textiles on display that reflected how the paisley motif has developed in the West during the 20th century.



From Buteh to Paisley: The Story of a Global Icon. A TRC exhibition.

The national newspaper *Trouw* published an **article by Els de Baan** that features the TRC exhibition about Paisley:

..... will also be a digital version of the exhibition that will come online at the same time as the actual one. So, for whatever reason, if you cannot actually come and see this colourful and fun exhibition, you can at least get a glimpse and a feel of this amazing story. Be aware, however, once you become attuned to paisley you will see it everywhere. It is taking over the world.....

Donation of Liberty of London paisley textiles

The TRC Leiden is pleased to announce that Liberty's has kindly donated some modern samples of their various paisley designs to be included in the TRC exhibition, *From Buteh to Paisley: The Story of a Global Icon*. The samples arrived on the 5th March and were quickly catalogued (TRC 2021.0636 – TRC 2021.0640) and added to the paisley exhibition, as well as to [the digital version](#).



Detail of a sample of the Pineapple Paisley design, Liberty of London, c. 2020 ([TRC 2021.0638](#)).

Liberty is a well-known emporium located on Great Marlborough Street, in the centre of London. Established in the late 19th century, it focusses on the design, production and sale of luxury textiles, clothing and household accessories. They are especially known for their Arts and Crafts, Art Nouveau and Oriental-style products.



Detail of a sample of the Bourton design, Liberty of London ([TRC 2021.0637](#)), with various types of floral paisley motifs.

The samples show a range of designs, and in particular they represent ornate and floral paisley forms. The textiles are intended to be used for clothing (cotton lawn versions) and, for a linen sample, for furnishing. Our particular favourite is the *Pineapple Paisley* design ([TRC 2021.0638](#)). It's such a cheerful and unusual piece.

Another design is called *Bourton* ([TRC 2021.0637](#)) and is regarded as a *Liberty Classic* and has been popular for many years. Two very different designs, yet both have the paisley motif in common.



Detail of a sample of Liberty's Tessa design ([TRC 2021.0640](#)).

According to Anna Buruma, the archivist of Liberty's design studio, the company, ever since it opened in 1875, has made a collection of thousands of textiles, many produced by the company itself, as well as pattern books from other companies, starting from the first half of the 19th century.

With respect to the theme of the TRC exhibition, the Liberty archives include a wide range of paisley motifs. The archive is an important source of designs and inspiration for Liberty's design team. The designs are produced in London and then printed at their factory in Como, northern Italy, before being sent to various countries around the world. Alas, the archive is not open to the general public.

The TRC Leiden would like to thank Liberty, and especially Anna Buruma, for their help and generosity.

Costumes from the island of Kihnu, Estonia

Heidi E. Stanionyte

Kihnu island is a unique place, situated in the Baltic Sea along the western coast of Estonia. As part of the TRC exhibition about the paisley motif we were given a woman's daily outfit from this island ([click here](#)). The donation was made by Merle Ernits, who is originally from Estonia but now lives in the Netherlands..



Long-sleeved everyday blouse decorated with paisley motifs, Kihnu island, Estonia, early 21st century ([TRC 2021.0408c](#)).

Regional women's dress on Kihnu is well-known in Estonia, but less familiar further away. The current design of Kihnu clothing can be traced back to the beginning of the 19th century when the communication between the island and the mainland intensified. Many of the printed textiles were produced in Russia, while the embroidery and woven pieces (striped skirt and narrow belt) were local.



Everyday woman's headscarf from the island of Kihnu, Estonia, early 21st century ([TRC 2021.0408d](#)).

The daily version of the regional outfit is still frequently worn and consists of locally

woven, woollen, striped skirts (*kört*, [TRC 2021.0408b](#)), an underskirt (*alusseelik*, [TRC 2021.0408a](#)), a cotton blouse (*sitsijakk*, [TRC 2021.0408c](#)), an apron (*pöll*, [TRC 2021.0408e](#)) and a scarf (*rätik*, [TRC 2021.0408d](#)). The apron is only worn by married women. Kihnu's daily clothes are often decorated with paisley patterns that make the aprons and scarves very attractive, with their additional range of floral and geometric patterns.

TRC participation in zoom conferences

During 2021 a number of zoom meetings, conferences and talks were participated in by the TRC director Gillian Vogelsang. These included a talk about the history and diversity of the buteh/paisley motif based on the TRC exhibition. Her talk was given for the Fowler Textile Council (Los Angeles) on the 24th March.

On Wednesday (10th November 2021) there was an online conference about Textile Tokens that was organised by Polly Leonard of the journal *Selvedge* (London). A variety of talks on very different subjects were given, including one by Prof. John Styles about textile tokens that came with babies and young children associated with the Foundling Hospital, London in the 18th century.

Dr Vogelsang's talk was on the European history of the handkerchief as a textile token (rather than a practical item), including how the ways in which the handkerchiefs were folded, carried and given, could convey romantic, as well as political and economic meanings. Various examples of handkerchiefs described in the talk came from the TRC Collection.

On Sunday (14th November) she was one of the mediators for an international online event, called the *Sustaining Legacies*

Symposium, which was organised by the **Zay Initiative** in Dubai. It was about the need for and future of dress collections in the Arab World. The other speakers included Richard

Wilding from the *Mansoojat Foundation* (Saudi Arabia and London), Shahira Mehrez (Cairo), Dr. Reem El Mutwalli (founder of the *Zay Initiative*, UAE) and Ben Evans (of the *Hali* journal in London). Other panels discussed elite and luxury groups in the UAE and how preserving Arab textile traditions was and is of growing importance to them. One question in particular was heart-felt – was it too late to save this essential, but undervalued form of material culture in the Middle East? The answer was no, it is not too late, but...

Educational activities

Because of the corona crisis few educational events took place at the TRC in 2021, but they included a number of workshops, courses as well as study days, some of which took place in both live and online forms.

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Bobbin lace classes

Thanks to Gon Hamburg, a lace teacher and member of OIDFA, bobbin lace lessons were given at the TRC. Participants were taught the basic elements of torchon lace.

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Study Day on Sub-Saharan African Embroidery, 31st July 2021. Some impressions

Shelley Anderson

While increasingly well-known for innovative fashion design, Africa is usually not the first

place that comes to mind for embroidery. In fact, some researchers talk about an African “embroidery belt”— which is only a relatively narrow area in the approximate middle of the continent, running from somewhere along the west coast to the east, where embroidery is practiced.



Participants of the study day on sub-Saharan embroidery look at a pictorial panel produced by the Sabane Kabuye workshop in Rwanda ([TRC 2021.0500a](#)). Photograph by Augusta de Gunzburg.

The participants in the TRC’s study day on sub-Saharan embroidery now know differently. Many styles of embroidery can be found throughout the continent, with some 93 different stitches and stitch combinations identified—including some 15 stitches that have not been seen outside of the continent.

A wide variety of materials are also used, including silk, cotton, wool, tree bark, palm raffia and pineapple fibre. A well-illustrated, introductory presentation by TRC Director Dr. Gillian Vogelsang-Eastwood began with the asymmetrical, geometric decorations on Wodaabe men’s hip wraps (compare [TRC 2014.0812](#)), and led to the heavily quilted armour for soldiers and horses in the Sahel. This armour was embroidered for high status individuals, and is first mentioned in medieval Arabic travelogues.

One absolute highlight of the day was the chance to see and touch actual garments. These included several elaborately embroidered women’s trousers from Ethiopia; a striking dark blue indigo Dogon shirt (compare [TRC 2021.2163](#)), with triangular sleeves and a tassel, decorated with silver plate embroidery; beautiful white work from Mali; and several examples of Kuba ‘velvet’,

made from raffia, from the Democratic Republic of Congo (compare [TRC 2021.2201](#)), among many others. The *babbariga* garments from Nigeria (compare [TRC 2018.3097](#)), where the embroidery on one garment can take between three to six months to complete, almost took your breath away.



Back of a tunic decorated with metal thread embroidery. Dogon, Mali, late 20th century ([TRC 2021.2163](#)).

What was also striking were the many stories about cultural exchange. Indian and Arab trade, Ottoman conquests and European colonisation. Another story that stuck in my mind was about the "Ghana boys" of Mali: In the 1960s many young men left Mali for jobs in neighbouring Ghana, where they were impressed by the affordability of Ghanaian cloth. When they returned to Mali, the "Ghana boys" developed a unique style of embroidery for their own tunics.

It was an exciting day. Seeing so much beauty left me with a sense of great satisfaction—and an urge to pick up a needle and try my own hand with embroidery.

A brief impression of the TRC study day on Indian subcontinent embroidery

Augusta de Gunzbourg

On the 6th August 2021 there was a Study Day at the TRC on the topic of Indian and Pakistani embroidery. It quickly became

apparent that these two countries are truly extraordinary centres for hand embroidery in all manners and forms.



An example of Agra 'garden' embroidery using silk and semi-precious gems, date: 2017 ([TRC 2017.2786](#)).

A relevant theme that is often explored at the TRC is how important trade and other dynamics across history have promoted the development of hand embroidery. One would obviously and immediately think of the Silk Road, colonial influences or even grand power structures such as the Mughal Empire when we discuss how textiles, skills and styles travelled across and towards the subcontinent, but these are far from being the only notable dynamics in this field.

In the south of India near Goa, a Christian Syriac community that was established more than 600 years ago still produces liturgical embroidery for Orthodox communities abroad. Another example is the Parsi community from around Mumbai and elsewhere in India, who descends from various Iranian Zoroastrian groups who migrated to India when pushed away by the growing tide of Islam in Iran. This group mixes Indian, Persian and even Chinese designs in their embroidered shawls!

Diversity was really the main word of the day: the vast number of boxes filled with examples of embroidery that were taken out from the TRC Collection reflected on the incredible variety in terms of materials used, tools, types of embroidery stitches and designs.

As such, nettle cloth and orchids threads can be used in Nepal, Delhi embroiderers use flossed silk on wool, Agra is famous for its gold and gem inlaid pieces while the Jain communities prefer to use synthetic silk in order to abide by their spiritual conviction not to affect any life forms. In Pakistan, embroidery can be found on leather shoes or, among some ethnic groups, worked with interesting decorative materials such as coins and buttons adorning women's dresses.



Fragment of a Kashmir embroidered shawl with a paisley/buteh motif (early 19th century ([TRC 2021.1223](#))).

With regards to tools and techniques, the same variation applies all over the subcontinent; hooks, needles, frames, no frames, laying out designs by memory or by pre-printing them with blocks, all these things can be found across that area of the world.

A true highlight of these study days is always the possibility to see with one's own eyes the examples that are talked about during the day. Nothing compares to being able to touch, analyse and even turn over pieces of embroidery in order to consider their texture, look at the stitches or see how the light reflects on them.

The truth is that one day is not enough to cover the amazing complexity of Indian and Pakistani embroidery and we all came out a little dazzled by the amount of information and beautiful examples that were shown. A suggestion that was made was to have a two-day course on the same topic, as it was so vast!

TRC Intensive Textile Course

The five-day intensive textile course is a regular feature of the TRC agenda, and has been organised for almost twenty years. It is taught in Dutch or English by Dr Gillian Vogelsang-Eastwood, director of the TRC.



Figuring out how to spin a thread using spindle and spinning wheels. TRC Intensive Textile Course, August 2021. Photograph: Evelyn Valencia

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 participants of the November 2021 TRC Intensive Textile Course, at the end of the five days! The second woman from the left is wearing a hand-woven Estonian skirt.

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The aim is to make textiles less ‘frightening’ and allow people to look and understand a textile, from virtually any historical period or culture.

In 2021 the TRC’s Intensive Textile Course was run in July, August October and November and attracted participants from many parts of the world who especially came to Leiden. They included people from Belgium, England, France, Germany, Greece, the Netherlands, Poland, as well as the US.

The TRC Collection

There are two main factors that make the [TRC Collection](#) a little different from some traditional museum collections. Firstly, it is an active collection and people are encouraged to come and look, photograph and use the items, rather than the objects being stored ‘for ever’ in boxes. Secondly, we are not concerned with only collecting beautiful items, we are interested in the story behind them. Something that may look ‘ordinary’ takes on a new dimension when its social, technical and economic context, the story behind the object, 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. Since then we have added thousands (literally) of items. Not every item is described in great detail nor are there photographs of everything. But every week new and extra details, as well as images were added. By the end of December 2021, there were nearly 37000 objects included in the catalogue, and some 32000 are photographed.

The following descriptions of some of the items added to the TRC Collection in 2021 have been ordered roughly according to subject matter. 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.

Most of the descriptions were also reflected in more detail in the various TRC blogs published in 2021.

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Acquisitions, purchases and gifts: some of the stories behind the objects

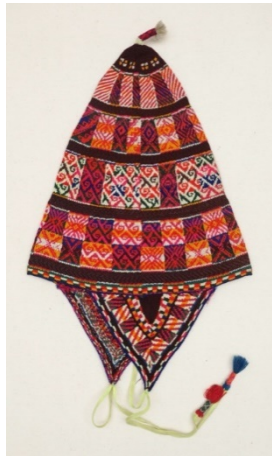
The TRC now regards it as normal for people to pop in or contact us otherwise every week with items for the collection or things to appear in the post. But what is the TRC Collection’s policy?

Considerable time was spent in 2021 thinking about and defining the nature of the collection, how it is to be used and the collection policy in general. The phrase that most closely catches the ‘spirit’ of the collection is ‘a broad-based encyclopaedic collection’, that reflects the diversity of the textiles in general. All of this means we do not specialise in one small area of textile and dress studies, but we reflect textiles and dress in all their glorious depth and width. We thus collect samples of all possible textile techniques, uses, forms of decoration, materials, and all other aspects related to the world of textiles and dress.

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A diverse donation to the TRC Leiden

In early 2021 we were given a donation of textiles, garments and headwear from the Hobijn family here in Leiden. The items were collected over many years by Hilde van der Linden's parents-in-law, Joop en May Hobijn-Roth, who were passionate about textiles. The items come from many parts of the world, literally from Indonesia to Guatemala via China, India and Africa and include a wide variety of techniques.



*Hand knitted cap from Peru, late-20th century
([TRC 2021.1917](#)).*

The donation included fourteen pairs of knitted socks that show a variety of heel and toe techniques, as well as patterns and colour combinations (TRC 2021.1936a-b – TRC 2021.1949a-b). One of them, [TRC 2021.1940a-b](#), has a delicate lacey design plus toes with a trellis work enclosing rosettes.

There are also several items of headwear, including eight Peruvian hand knitted caps ([TRC 2021.1912](#) – [TRC 2021.1919](#)) that are ‘easy’ to identify. In contrast, there are two items that have proven to be more elusive. One of them ([TRC 2021.1962](#)) is a straw or grass hat with a tall crown and decorated with strips of coloured leather. We now know that such hats are worn by Fulani, Hausa and Zerma nomads and cattle herders living in West Africa.



*Straw or grass hat from West Africa, decorated
with strips of leather ([TRC 2021.1962](#)).*

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More African donations

In addition to the Hobijn donation, during 2021 we were offered various other African items from several different sources. Many of these objects were donated by the family of Willem and Grace Bakker, who travelled widely in Africa, the Middle East (especially Egypt), Central Asia (including Afghanistan) and Asia (notably Indonesia).

The African pieces come from various countries, including Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, as well as Lesotho and Swaziland in southern Africa. There are Tuareg textiles, such as a man’s *tegelmuth* ([TRC 2021.2087](#)) or head and face veil, which is made from numerous 4.3 cm wide strips of hand woven cotton cloth that were sewn together and then dyed dark blue with indigo.

There is also a Tuareg woman’s combined overdress and head veil ([TRC 2021.2094](#)) from Mali, made from a single width of open weave cotton cloth dyed with indigo. An intriguing piece is a leather Tuareg cushion cover, also from Mali, that was painted with geometric designs ([TRC 2021.2115](#)). Another leather item in the donation is associated with the Mossi people from Burkina Faso and consists of a straw hat partially covered with black and red painted leather ([TRC 2021.2075](#)).



*Detail of a length of handwoven cloth from
Nigeria, 1970s ([TRC 2021.2117](#)).*

From Nigeria are various long lengths of cloth with inlaid geometric patterns (TRC 2021.2116, TRC 2021.2117 and TRC 2021.2118) using supplementary wefts. Also from Nigeria there is a large, metal container or purse (TRC 2021.2082) with a leather fringe ending in bells. Another Nigerian item is a kaftan (TRC 2021.2108) that was designed and sold by Lebanese merchants in the main towns, especially to ex-pats and diplomatic families. In accounts of Nigerian textiles the emphasis is often laid on local, Indian or Chinese designed textiles and garments, but the connections with the Middle East are sometimes overlooked.

The donation also includes examples of jewellery from West Africa, notably very heavy bangles (TRC 2021.2080 and TRC 2021.2081) made of silver coloured metal. How these could be comfortably worn remains a mystery! As part of the gift there was also a pile of bangle-shaped metal bars (TRC 2021.2083a-d). These are *manillas*, namely a form of currency that was used for centuries for trade in the sub-Saharan region. They are objects closely related to world trade and more specifically, slavery, another important story all too closely linked to the history of Africa.

From Swaziland in southern Africa there is a beer strainer (*ivovo*, TRC 2021.2084) made in a basketry technique. We have been trying to find out more information about this household object, but so far have not found many details. Also from southern Africa is a San people (Bushmen) container (TRC 2021.2129) made out of a small tortoise shell and decorated with shell (probably ostrich) disc beads.

All in all the Bakker collection can be used to highlight many aspects of the complex and extremely diverse history of African textiles and dress. It ranges quite literally from the Tuareg of the Sahel to the San people of southern Africa. It reflects local and international textile techniques, the trade of objects and people, as well as attitudes

towards sustainability and making use of locally available items. A lot to take in and think about, with more to come.

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Savane Kabuye embroideries from Rwanda, Africa

During 2021 and as part of the TRC Leiden's preparations for the *Encyclopedia of Embroidery from Sub-Saharan Africa* (Bloomsbury, London, 2022), we have been in contact with several embroidery groups in various African countries, notably the *Queen Amina Embroiderers* in Nigeria.



Savane Kabuye embroidery, Rwanda, 2020 (TRC 2021.0500a).

We also contacted the *Savane Kabuye* group in Rwanda. We have also been talking with Juliana Meehan, an American who has been promoting the Rwandan group's work in the US with a travelling exhibition called *PAX Rwanda: Embroideries of the Women of Savane Kabuye*.

Juliana Meehan has very kindly helped with an entry for the encyclopaedia about the group and also donated an example of Savane Kabuye's work. The embroidery is now part of the TRC Collection (TRC 2021.0500a-b).

The embroidery has been worked in a technique we were not familiar with and it works really well. Embroidery yarns generally used in Europe and America, such

as **DMC** mercerised threads are too expensive for the local workers, especially given the large scale on which some of the *Savane Kabuye* embroideries are produced.

So a simple, but effective replacement was found, namely a good quality sewing thread and usually with three different colours at one time. The three threads in different colours pass through the eye of the needle, and in this way they mix colours as a painter would mix paint.

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Mapula embroideries from South Africa

During late August 2021 the TRC was visited by José Vermeij and her sister. José is based in Johannesburg, South Africa, and is actively involved in an embroidery group called Mapula. José gave the participants of the August 5-day intensive textile course an impromptu talk about Mapula and the stories and people behind the embroideries.



Mapula embroidery from South Africa, depicting the funeral of Nelson Mandela (TRC 2021.02540).

She also brought with her a selection of the embroideries, some of which the TRC has bought for the *Encyclopaedia* and the exhibition.

The Charles and Carolyn Knobler Collection of Mexican and Guatemalan garments

For the last few years, Charles and Carolyn Knobler (Los Angeles) have been sending the TRC various items from their collection of Mexican and Guatemalan garments. These include men, women and children's garments that are made in a variety of woven and embroidered techniques. These items are of particular value to the TRC as they have been given exact provenances so we know where these garments come from.



An embroidered top for a woman, from Mexico (TRC 2020.0531).

They include a wide range of patterns that show the diversity of colour combinations, motifs and symbolism regarded as suitable for these garments. It was our plan to display many of these garments in an (actual) exhibition in the autumn of 2021, but unfortunately due to the Corona pandemic this was not possible.

We would very much like to thank both Charles and Carolyn for their continuing support of the TRC Leiden, and for especially helping us to build up our Central and South American collection of textiles and dress.

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Sukajan jackets from Japan. Attire for the 'bad boys'



Back of a Japanese sukajan jacket, early 21st century ([TRC 2021.0625](#)).

With the help of Naoko Kikuchi (Japan), a TRC (long distance) volunteer, the TRC in Leiden has been able to acquire a small collection of embroidered *sukajan* jackets from Japan. The term *sukajan* derives from: (Yokio) *Suka-jan*, meaning ‘(Yoko)suka jumpers’.

This type of jacket dates to the end of the Second World War (1939-1945) and is based on American baseball jackets. They were worn by personnel on the US military base at Yokosuka (a city in the Kanagawa Prefecture). A specific feature of the *sukajan* is the use of machine embroidery (using a single needle machine that is hand operated, rather than large commercial machines).

The wearing of the *sukajan* jackets became very popular in the 1950s, with both American and Japanese men in Japan and elsewhere, and they have since then become a cult garment associated with ‘bad boys’. Various Western fashion designers and stores, such as Diesel and H&M, picked up on this form of clothing.

By the early 21st century the same type of jackets was produced for women, with suitable motifs (see for example [TRC 2021.0627](#), which is decorated with butterflies and the name of Yokosuka).

The *sukajan* jackets donated to the TRC will feature in the forthcoming *Encyclopedia of*

East Asian embroidery (Bloomsbury, London), organised by the TRC. They also form an intriguing part of the TRC’s growing collection dedicated to the wide range of textiles and garments associated with Japan.

We would like to thank both Naoko Kikuchi and Francesco Montuori for their help.

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Japanese *temari* and wrapped thimbles (*kaga yubinuki*)

Naoko Kikuchi

Not long ago we were given by Naoko Kikuchi some beautiful and unusual thimbles, namely silk wrapped forms from Japan. These are called *kaga yubinuki* and are related to *kagari temari*, the well-known Japanese wrapped balls, of which the TRC has several in its collection

Temari literally means a hand ball in Japanese and there are some variations of *temari* in terms of materials and production methods. Among them is a *kagari temari*. *Kagari* is an adjective form of the verb “*kagaru*”, which means fixing thread by wrapping around and stitching. The surface of a *kagari temari*, for example, is wrapped with a variety of threads into a range of patterns that make it appear to be embroidered.



Kagari temari ([TRC 2021.1262](#)).

Seamstresses make colourful *yubinuki* (thimbles) using left-over silk threads in a similar method as with *temari*-making. During the first three days of the New Year, the seamstresses make such thimbles for

themselves at home in order to advance their sewing skills.



Kaga yubinuki, Japan, c. 2020 (TRC 2021.1770a).

They wrap paper ring thimbles with silk in various auspicious or evil-repellent patterns, such as *yabane* (arrow's wing), *seigaiha* (ocean wave), *uroko* (scale) and *yatara-jima* (a striped pattern).

When synthetic materials became available in the mid-20th century, many people started to use them to make *temari* and *yubinuki* from foam polystyrene for the core of *temari* and artificial and synthetic threads such as rayon, nylon and acrylic, as well as cotton and silk threads for the decoration. By the late 20th century the *yubinuki* thimble was only still being produced in the Kaga region, but in 2006 Ōnishi Yukiko published several books on the subject in order to preserve and encourage this tradition.

Today people from different parts of Japan enjoy making *yubinuki* as a hobby to use as ornaments and accessories, rather than as practical thimbles.

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Japanese kimonos from the late 1950s to the 1970s

Naoko Kikuchi

Between March and May 2021, I received a series of kimonos from my friend Masako Noda (née Shibata) after the demolition of her

husband's grandparents' house on the outskirts of Nagoya, in the Aichi Prefecture. I have given these items to the TRC Leiden.

Masako values traditional Japanese culture and kimonos and performs traditional dance and tea ceremonies in kimono, and therefore preferred these items to go to an institute that would appreciate the garments and present them to a wider audience.



Casual, woollen kimono with a pattern typical for traditional cotton kasuri (ikat) garment (TRC 2021.2144).

Masako's own family is from the former samurai class in Okazaki. She married Tetsuji Noda, from a family of a former powerful landlord, village headmaster, and later, a city counsellor.

In the Edo period (around the mid-19th century) the Noda family's contribution to local farming and to the local Owari Tokugawa domain was such that they were allowed to have a family name – this was very unusual as farmers didn't normally have a family name and swords which were only for samurai.

The Noda and Shibata family donations to the TRC include kimonos from over three generations - ranging from children's celebratory kimonos from the early 1900s through casual kimonos from the 1960s - 1970s. They reflect a traditional Japanese custom passed down through generations, the modern history of Japanese textiles and how people's attitude towards kimonos changed.

Tracing a young girl from Friesland



Sampler made by Akke Scheepsma, aged 12 or 13, Schettens, Friesland, in 1852 ([TRC 2021.1805](#)).

In early May 2021 the TRC Leiden was given 25 **samplers** of various types, from Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands, which date from the mid-19th to the early 20th century.

One of the pieces caught our eye, namely **TRC 2021.1805**. It has a (partly faded) black ground. The colour black for the ground is generally associated with Friesland, in the north of the Netherlands. The ground is made of **linen** and is embroidered with woollen yarns in **cross stitch** and **double running stitch** (Holbein stitch).

The central design is a stylised tree of life in the form of a decorative V-shape with a pair of small, stylised birds. The tree is surrounded by vases of flowers. Along the upper edge of the sampler there is the name AKKE S SCHEEPSMA and the date of 1852. Akke, it should be added, is a traditional Frisian name for a girl or woman.

Who was she? A Google search led us to a woman with the same name who in the 19th century lived in the village of Schettens, Friesland. With the help of a local historian, André Buwalda, we subsequently learnt more about the girl. She was known as Akke Simons Scheepsma. She was born in the village of Schettens, some 30 km southwest

of Leeuwarden, on 1st October 1839 to a well-established farming family. Her father was Symon Klazes Scheepsma (1811-1857) and her mother was Gerbrig Wybrens' Scheepsma-Douwsma (1805-1886). Her parents married in 1835. They had six children, Akke being the third.

We are gradually finding out more details, and we soon hope to know much more with the help of André Buwalda and others. To date we know that Akke completed the sampler in 1852, when she was 12 or 13 years old. It is likely a piece worked at home; it lacks the lay-out associated with school samplers that were meant to show the girl's achievements. Does all of this mean something? Why is her name spelt with three E's? And why are the two "S's inverted?

Akke married Tjerk Sjoerds van 't Zet, on 20 May 1865 when she was 25 years old. Her husband was a labourer. We are not clear yet how many children they had, but one of them was Tjerk Tjerks van 't Zet, who was born in 1880. There were other children, who were all born in different villages. This would indicate that Akke's husband was a local farm worker who was hired on a yearly basis at the local hiring fairs held in early May (shades of Thomas Hardy and *The Mayor of Casterbridge*). Once a contract expired, they moved onto another farm in another village.

We know that she died in 1900 in Schettens, so she may have returned to her family and to the farm where she lived as a girl, after the death of her husband in 1896.

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Anchors away!

Shelley Anderson

In January 2021 the TRC in Leiden was given by the Van Lonkhuijzen family in Haarlem, the Netherlands, a lovely late 19th century red cotton jacket (**TRC 2021.0191**). It is lined with white cotton and is fastened with buttons that sport a crown and anchor motif. The

jacket has a military cut to it. Along with the military inspired buttons, the jacket might have been worn by a Dutch woman or girl to show their patriotism.



Late 19th century military-style jacket for a young woman, the Netherlands ([TRC 2021.0191](#)).



Late 19th century studio photograph of a young boy in sailor's costume, Bradford, Yorkshire, UK ([TRC 2019.0001](#)).

Military-style clothing worn by civilians has a long, and lasting history. The TRC's Dutch jacket might have been influenced by the British spencer, a short-waisted jacket worn by men and women in the late 18th and early 19th century. The name comes from George, the 2nd Earl Spencer (1758-1834), who reportedly started the style after the long tails on his jacket were burnt when he stood in front of his fireplace, so he cut them off. The style was adopted as a mess jacket for semi-formal occasions by the British military, and soon spread to other countries. It is still part of the uniform in many militaries today

Princess Diana-style clothing

In July 2021 the TRC was given a donation of stylish garments that were influenced by the fashion house of Chanel and especially by the garments that were worn by Princess Diana (1961-1997). The pieces were donated by Ms van Dijk, a Leiden resident, and come from her personal wardrobe. They were worn at the end of the 1980s and until the mid-1990s. The donation consists of items mostly sewn by the donor's mother and a friend, supplemented with a few ready-to-wear pieces.



Princess Diana watching a polo match in Cirencester, in 1983. She is wearing a blouse with black spots, and a white skirt.



White blouse with black spots ([TRC 2021.2983b](#)), made in imitation of Princess Diana's blouse that she wore at Cirencester, 1983.

In the 1980s Ms van Dijk had just started a professional career and she felt she had to dress accordingly. At the time, suitable business clothing was difficult to find for women, especially as she was petite.

Ms van Dijk admired Diana's style because it was traditional, but often with a dramatic twist, especially with respect to the choice of colour, colour combinations and cut. She felt that Princess Diana's clothing was never boring, so she decided that if the British princess could wear this type of clothing, so could she!

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Dutch designer clothing

The TRC also accepted in the summer of 2021 a very different range of Western urban clothing, namely an original 'little black dress' outfit ([TRC 2021.2185](#)) consisting of a black, beaded jacket and a black velvet skirt, by the Dutch designer Edgar Voss (1931-2010), and more spectacularly a wedding dress especially designed by Max Heijmans (1918-1997), for the wedding of Willem and Monica Penders in 1966 ([TRC 2021.2184](#)). We also received some of their wedding photographs.

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Corona face masks



Face mask with Christian symbols, used in one of the Eastern Orthodox Churches, early 2021 ([TRC 2021.0621](#)).

In 2020 the TRC published a [blog](#) about various types of face masks that had been added to the TRC Collection as a reflection of dress and identity in the era of the covid-19 pandemic. In the first half of 2021 the TRC acquired more face masks of three very different types and backgrounds. The first group consists of three masks made for priests of the (Eastern) Orthodox Christian Church during services and masses ([TRC 2021.0620](#), [TRC 2021.0621](#) and [TRC 2021.0622](#)). They were made using cloth of various colours with Christian symbols, as well as embroidered crosses



Face mask made from ikat material, Indonesia, 2020/2021 ([TRC 2021.1352](#)).

Then came a couple of ikat examples from Indonesia via the Family Bloembergen, Leiden, who have given a range of other items, including Japanese and Indonesian textiles ([TRC 2021.1352](#) and [TRC 2021.1353](#)). The masks are made of ikat cloth and they will be on display in our forthcoming exhibition simply called IKAT (opening 2022).



Postcard with face masks, produced by Osnabrück University, Germany, 2020/2021 ([TRC 2021.1494](#)).

The latest group of face masks arrived yesterday (on Monday, 3 May) through the post thanks to the kindness of Prof. Bäbel Schmidt, Osnabrück University, Germany (TRC 2021.1492 and TRC 2021.1493). These are made in the textile department of the university especially for staff and students, using donated cloth.

We have been discussing for some time now how the TRC and the students of Osnabrück University can continue working together after an initial visit of a group of students before the corona crisis. Despite the current situation, or perhaps because of it, we have come up with quite a few actual and digital plans, which will be further worked out later this year.

In addition, we have included several paisley (buteh) face masks and neck gaiters in the TRC exhibition on the history and use of paisley. This exhibition, by the way, will (all being well) be re-opened on the 1st June and we have extended it to 16 December 2021 to give people a chance to see an amazing range of items decorated with the ubiquitous paisley motif.

In the autumn of 2021 the TRC was given a face mask that is hand painted with an image of a girl and an elephant in a landscape setting (TRC 2021.2484). It is signed Fabrice and has the title: "ZoZo". The face mask was made by the Dutch artist Fabrice Hünd (1961-2021) and donated to the TRC by friends of the artist, Monica Penders and her son Jirka, who a few weeks ago also bought some hand painted Christmas tree baubles directly from the artist.

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Hooks and eyes: A story of medieval fasteners

Gillian Vogelsang

In September 2021 the TRC was given a plastic box by Sytske Wijnsma that included a

group of pins and other sewing items that were found in Zeeland, the Netherlands, and date to before 1532. The box also included various types of hooks and eyes.



*Two metal hooks from Zeeland, before 1532.
Magnification: 15.2. Dino-Lite microscope (TRC 2021.2739a and b).*

Most of the hooks (TRC 2021.2739a-l) are made by using a length of wire with loops at each end, which was then folded in half, probably with pliers of some kind, into a long U-shape leaving the two loops next to each other at the top. The lower half of the U-shape was folded back on itself to create a hook.



*Two eyes with twisted ends, Zeeland, before 1532.
Magnification 16.8 (TRC 2021.2741e-f).*

The eyes were made in three different ways, with (A) a wire circle with the ends twisted back on themselves (TRC 2021.2741c-f) and (B) a length of wire bent into a U-shape with small loops at each end (TRC 2021.2740a-e). A third type (C) is a combination of the two (TRC 2021.2741a-b). In addition to the hooks and eyes, the donation included several metal circles (TRC 2021.2744a-e), which may have been used as eyelets.

These findings inevitably led to the question when exactly did hooks and eyes develop as a form of fastener for garments? A quick online search suggested that some believe that they are an American invention dating from the 19th century. However, it is clear that the

history of hooks and eyes is much older and can be traced back to artisans in medieval Europe.



Two eyes with twisted and looped ends, Zeeland, before 1532. Magnification: 16.3 ([TRC 2021.2741a-b](#)).

In the *Dictionary of Fashion History*, for example, Valerie Cumming, Cecil W. Cunnington and Phillis E. Cunnington (2010:105) indicate that there is a 14th century written reference to a form of 'hooks and eyes' in England that was known as crochets and loops. Furthermore, by the early 16th century, according to various sources, hooks and eyes were made and used in various parts of Europe.



Jean Fouquet, Portrait of the Ferrara Court Jester Gonella, c. 1445. Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna. Public domain.

In an earlier book by Cecil and Phillis Cunnington, called *The History of Underwear* (1992:20), there is a reference to a painting by the Flemish artist Pieter Brueghel the Elder (c. 1525-1569) called *The Old Shepherd*, which is dated to about 1567.

The portrait is of an old man who is wearing a linen shirt that is open at the collar to reveal two hooks and corresponding eyes.

However, it would appear that the painting is not by Brueghel, but by the French painter, Jean Fouquet (c. 1420-1481), who worked for various royal and noble courts in Italy. It would seem that the portrait depicts Pietro Gonnella (c. 1390-1441), who was a jester at the court of the House of Este in Ferrara, in northern Italy. The portrait is now in the *Kunsthistorisches Museum*, Vienna and has been dated to c. 1445. As Gonnella died in 1441, it is not clear if the date should be a little earlier, or the portrait was made shortly after his death.

What is clear is that the use of metal hooks, with either eyes or loops, can be dated to at least the mid-15th century and that their form is very similar to those found in Zeeland that date to before 1532, so about a hundred years later. It was not until the mid- to late 18th century that mechanically made hooks and eyes became available in Europe and took over the artisan role of the hook and eye maker.

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Traditional lace caps from Leiden and the Rijnland



Lange kap (long cap) from the Rijnland area, decorated with bobbin lace, c. 1880 ([TRC 2016.1153](#)).

Rijnland is the name for part of the Netherlands that lies east and around the ancient city of Leiden. It used to have a special dress tradition, marked by lace caps for women. These caps come in a variety of forms, depending on whether the wearer was going to church, was in mourning, wealthy or not (such as a farm labourer or a merchant's wife). In addition to the various social forms we look at the various techniques used to decorate these caps, including bobbin lace, hand embroidered tulle (net), and machine made forms.

The TRC received a photo album with images dating from the late nineteenth century, all of them, so it appears, showing men and women from the Van den Akker family from Zoeterwoude and beyond, just to the southeast of Leiden. Nel de Wit, who donated the album to the TRC, grew up on the farm Cronesteyn, near Leiden, and the farm is still there, now being used as a health centre. Her mother, Marijtje de Wit, née Rijnsburger, was born in Weipoort, a small village now part of Zoeterwoude.

The images include people of different ages, wearing Sunday best outfits, but also daily forms and dress for wearing when in mourning, not to mention men in regional and urban dress and in military uniform. Some of these people are named.



Photograph by A. Koorenhoff, Leiden, of a woman in Rijnland dress, ca. 188 ([TRC 2021.2439f](#)).

Another side, literally, of this story is who took the photographs? Fortunately, there are details on the reverse sides of the photographs of at least three, mid- to late 19th century professional photographers from Leiden, namely Jean Henry Hoffmeister (1823-1904), Abraham Koorenhoff (1867-1917), Israel David Kiek (1811-1899), and Jan Goedeljee (1824-1905). Amazingly the latter had a studio at the Hogewoerd 160/162, literally next door to the TRC's current location at Hogewoerd 164.

Someone else who has been particularly helpful with both time and information is Jankees Goud ([Atelier Dracht](#), Putten). We have acquired from Jankees a small collection of short, Rijnland caps of various types and moments. So together with the caps we already had in the TRC Collection we now have a variety of caps dating from the 1860s to the 1930s, including long and short versions, some of which were worn with an *oorijzer* (ornate metal bands worn around the head) and others without an *oorijzer*.

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:

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