

TRC Newsletter

Spring 2012



2012 has just started and it is already promising to be an exciting year! In particular attention needs to be focused on the TRC's new exhibition about women's headgear, and the exciting proposals to expand the size and facilities on offer at the TRC.

Cover Your Head!

The highlight of the year (so far) was the opening of the TRC's latest exhibition *Cover Your Head!* The exhibition was created with the help of the Ambassadors' Spouses Association (ASA, The Hague). Various embassies kindly provided headgear and complete outfits.

The concept of women's head and hair covering, especially in the Islamic world, attracts a lot of attention in the media, but little is said about the actual and highly diverse ways with which women

and girls from all religions and cultural backgrounds, both in the Netherlands and throughout the world, bedeck their heads and hair. The new TRC exhibition shows over fifty examples of traditional Dutch lace caps from the four corners of the country, and 101-plus modern and traditional ways of covering and decorating the head and hair, worldwide. There are examples from all continents, Africa, America, Asia, Europe, and even from the Pacific islands. There are individual items as well as complete outfits, all of which help to show how a well-decorated head is an important matter, both for the wearer and society.

Rush of visitors at the opening of the TRC exhibition (January 2012).

In the exhibition it is possible to see many different forms of head and hair attire, including items made of beads, cloth, embroidery, feathers, furs, rainbow colours, shells, even human hair. Some of the items on display are elaborate constructions that simply make you wonder how they could ever be worn, let alone while walking or dancing.



The exhibition was opened on the 31st January 2012, by Mrs. Loes Bijl de Vroe (wife of the Chief of Protocol, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The Hague). Speaking with her at the opening were Mr. Jan-Jaap de Haan, deputy mayor of Leiden, and Dr. Gillian Vogelsang-Eastwood. The opening was attended by over 80 visitors including numerous members of the ASA. The ASA members also very kindly provided a wide variety of 'finger food' from different countries. Both the exhibition and food were greatly enjoyed by all of those attending the opening. The TRC is now talking with the ASA about the possibility of working together on an exhibition about embroidery from around the world in about 18 months' time.



Mrs. L. Bijl de Vroe, Dr. Gillian Vogelsang-Eastwood and Mr. Jan-Jaap de Haan speaking at the official opening of the Cover Your Head! exhibition.

The exhibition can be visited during the opening hours of the TRC. Entrance is free, but donations are welcome.

Guided tours: During the period of the exhibition every Wednesday afternoon. You do not need to register in advance. The guided tours last from 14.00 until 15.00 and cost € 7,50 per person.

Workshop: A Second Life for Your Hat

Bring an old or forgotten hat and try to make it into something fashionable, together with Ms. Jenni van Dijke. There is always something that can be changed to enliven an old hat. Make use of your own creativity and leave the TRC again with a 'new' hat.

Date: Sunday 18 March, 14.00-16.00 uur

Teacher: Ms. Jenni van Dijke

Costs: €17.50 including coffee/tea and materials

Number of participants: 6 -12

Please register before 14 March.

TRC extending its opening hours!

Since moving to the Hogewoerd 164, the TRC has been growing at a steady rate. In 2011 we experienced a 40% growth in visitors' numbers. In addition, more and more donations of textiles, garments and accessories have increased the TRC's study collection. On the day of the opening of

the headgear exhibition, for example, people came with unexpected donations of garments from Ecuador, Russia and Sudan!

Since the beginning of January 2012 we have already had over 400 visitors and many more are expected to come over the next few months.

Because of the increased demands on our time and facilities it has been decided to extend the opening days to include Thursdays as well (starting March 8th). This means that the TRC will be open Monday-Tuesday-Wednesday-Thursday from 10.00 until 16.00 to the general public. Friday, Saturday and Sunday will remain available by appointment only.

The next TRC exhibition

In November 2011 the TRC was given a collection of European textiles dating from the 16th to the 19th centuries by the Van Gerwen family. The collection includes fine velvets, silks, as well as printed textiles. They represent a wide range of hand weaving techniques, as well as the changing face of patterns and hues that were popular in Europe over a period of four centuries. These textiles are currently being catalogued by Caroline Brasjen-Mudde, a TRC volunteer.



An 18th century silk from the Van Gerwen collection now in the TRC

A number of these beautiful and technically intriguing textiles will be on display from June until the end of August at the TRC Gallery. In addition, there will be a number of Catholic ecclesiastical garments dating from the 18th century on display, to show how these textiles used to be worn.

This exhibition is a must for people interested in complex weave forms and beautiful silks.

There are rumours that the exhibition after that of the Van Gerwen collection will be about Iranian urban and regional dress. But you will have to read the next TRC newsletter or keep an eye on the TRC's website (www.trc-leiden.nl) to see what is actually the case.

The TRC collection

The TRC has recently been asked as to the purpose of the collection, why, for instance, did we accept some necklaces from the 1970s? The answer is complex, but basically the TRC is NOT a museum, it is a research centre with an active study collection. We do not just collect elite items of domestic and 'exotic' textile arts, but items that are directly related to either (a) textile technology, or (b) the way humans modify and clothe (in the widest sense of these words) their bodies. The TRC's collection is deliberately intended to reflect a wide range of social and economic backgrounds from many different cultures. Because the collection is meant for study purposes we encourage people to come and have a look at the garments, and if the 'students' are seriously interested then many items can be examined in closer detail. The aim of the TRC is thus to foster:

Research Presentation Inspiration

Judging from the reactions of our many visitors (especially repeat visitors), we are succeeding.

Some recent donations

Over the last few weeks the TRC has been given many items for its collection, including a wonderful group of Asian textiles and garments. Most of these pieces come from Indonesia and China, but there is also an Indian *palampore* from the 19th century. These are large sheets with a block printed design of the tree of life. The Indonesian textiles include woven forms, some with metal threads, as well as *ikat* and batik decorated textiles. All of these pieces date to prior to the mid-1930s and were the property of a former Dutch official in Indonesia.

Following the opening of the headgear exhibition the TRC was also given a small collection of Dutch lace caps dating from the early part of the twentieth century. They include Zuid-Holland forms, Zeeland examples and what appears to be a Brabant-style cap. Other items in this donation were some embroideries from Andalusia in southern Spain.

Supporting the TRC's growth!

All of the TRC's varied work, especially the production of its varied exhibitions, could not take place without the help of financial donations. We would like to ask everyone for help, whether through a personal contribution in the TRC's donation box, or via its bank account. Donations, for example, can be made over to the TRC ING bank account 2982359 in the name of the Textile Research Centre, Leiden.

Please remember, the TRC is officially a so-called ANBI, so all financial donations are deductible for Dutch tax payers.

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