

**THIS  
MOMENT  
IS BEING  
● RECORDED**

V&A/RCA History of Design MA  
2020–2022

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V&A/RCA History of Design MA  
Summer 2022

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# FOREWORD

This Moment is Being Recorded. How often have we heard words like these over the last two years? During the Covid-19 pandemic, the world began working online. We discovered that, no matter where we were physically, we could be together, in the same moment, through the Zoom screen. We discovered, by using the ‘chat’ function, that though we could no longer ‘read the room’, we could at least read a lively and collegiate stream of ideas and information in the comments box, which was downloadable, to keep as a file forever. And, if the wifi went down, we discovered ourselves in moments of total isolation through disconnection. But, we could watch the recording instead.

This publication celebrates a remarkable group of MA students who have been working across the world over the course of the past 15 or 18 months against all the odds of the Covid-19 pandemic and produced a cluster of fantastic dissertations. Gradually, across 2021-22, the RCA and the V&A were able to re-open, partially, and then fully. Throughout their time with us, our students amazed us with their professionalism, energy, generosity, and dedication to being really ‘present’, even when online. The work they produced has been as varied, as rigorous and as boundary-pushing as we could have wished for, and the breadth of their collaborations across the College and Museum and with external partnerships has also shown what a productive and cohesive group of design historians can achieve. Class of 2022, many congratulations! You were crucial in continuing to make our Masters degree the exciting learning experience that it has always been.

The V&A/RCA History of Design programme marks this year its 40th anniversary. When the programme was set up in 1982 it was a pioneering MA course concentrating on the period post 1650, mostly in Britain and the US. It was then the first postgraduate centre for the study of the history of design in the world. Today the programme is internationally recognised as the leading programme in the field. In the past four decades we have expanded our chronology to 1400 and our focus on the contemporary continues to develop too, as we forge ways to think critically about the very recent histories of design. Our geography

has become truly global. The study of photography and performance through design history have also come to the forefront, reflecting wider developments in the discipline and recent game-changing acquisitions at the V&A, such as the Royal Photographic Society Collection. History as public practice now underpins the work of the programme, as we craft histories of design and material culture that are public-facing and socially and environmentally engaged, in line with our location in the public museum and the art school.

This breadth is reflected and reinvigorated by the research developed by the students, providing original insights into a dazzling range of research microcosms. The student dissertation research journeys have taken us – to mention just a few – from Mexican freestyle wrestling to Italian sericulture in the 21st Century; from Caribbean homes in London to the Building Conservation Movement in Bath; from Japanese men’s dress to early modern maps in the Philippines; from the Kashmir shawl to fashion in Malay photography; from British ballet to the balconies of Soviet Russia; from the sustainable web to British women’s swimming caps; from Hong Kong’s trams to the design of seating in the V&A’s Raphael Cartoons Galleries; from Japanese leather papers to Spanish Moroccan dress; from 1960s London fashion and film to big cat fur trade; from Mariana Pestana’s ‘enactments’ to public sculpture in Brussels; from ‘quick-change’ performance to garment mending; from photography copyright to the eighteenth-century grottoes.

We look forward to seeing what this graduating cohort of design historians will do next, as they continue to record moments, replay moments, and analyse the recording of moments. After all, what else is that a historian really does?

Dr Marta Ajmar  
Dr Sarah Cheang

**V&A Head of Programme for History of Design**  
**RCA Head of Programme for History of Design**

# EDITORS' LETTER

Day one on the V&A/RCA History of Design MA, 14th September 2020: a contact sheet of faces, nervously sitting in anticipation of the first Zoom meeting of a 15/18-month master's programme. It was a fascinating (if not intimidating) day of introductions, as we met one another for the first time through a screen and listened to the impressive backgrounds and academic interests of our classmates.

As we produce this publication now, it is amazing to think of the many transformations our cohort has undergone. Since our induction week, we have met in person and learned how tall our classmates and tutors are. We have gained access, no longer with sordid pre-booking, to the V&A's galleries and the hallowed halls of the National Art Library. Most recently, we wore the RCA's gowns with their red hoods and fluffy white trims at the Royal Albert Hall and Royal Geographical Society to graduate in all our Christmas-elf splendour.

One of the greatest pleasures in putting these pages together was being able to continue getting to know our peers and their personalities as design historians and researchers. From the music they listened to while writing, to the museum object they were most curious about, we took it as an opportunity to share their inner quirks, thoughts, fears and joys of the research world. Interspersed throughout are 'Q&A with our Cohort' pages, which share our answers to some lighthearted questions, as well as a quiz for our readers – 'Which iconic V&A object are you?'.

Alongside the dissertation abstracts and images, we invited the creative outputs that hadn't necessarily been shared in the academic setting. In this publication, readers will find photo essays and thought pieces, as well as a step-by-step guide to making a map and a walking tour of Brussels. What stands out is the sheer breadth of research topics covered by our cohort. You can read abstracts and extracts from students' work in the following pages, but if your interest has been piqued by a specific topic or approach then you can reach out to members of our cohort through the directory at the back of this publication.

After a year and a half of 'zooming in', we now get to zoom out, and reflect on what we have learnt and experienced throughout the

past 18 months. With a discipline and degree that draws focus on the materiality of objects and materials, we made the most of a virtual and not-so-physical research approach for a significant part of our studies. This irony partially encouraged the realisation of a physical object. This publication aims to give back to our cohort a sense of the tactility we lacked at the start of the MA, through what we hope to be a lasting addition to everyone's bookshelves.

While the RCA teaches all who pass through to think outside the box and break the mould, the V&A provided a veritable cabinet of curiosity with which to practise this. However, it was the lessons learnt in the ethics and responsibilities of the historian which have impacted our cohort the most. Instead of simply recording history we have now been tasked with questioning, decolonising and activating design history. We recognise how our public practice can influence the way we look back at the past, but also, importantly, the way we look forward.

Margot Drayson  
Euphemia Franklin  
Hannah Heaf

# REFLECTIONS ON HYBRIDITY



History of Design Symposium at the V&A  
Lydia and Manfred Gorvy Lecture Theatre,  
24 May 2022.

As any programme from the Royal College of Art, the History of Design MA programme typically brings together students from across the globe. They come together in London to start their journeys, collecting and exchanging unique experiences, forging their own identities as design historians.

Our cohort made the transition from harsh lockdowns to a gradual return to normality. We started by having our classes online and ended them in person. The way we are showcasing our work embodies this hybrid experience: we have both a physical, paper-based publication and a website. And so does our symposium, held in person at the V&A while being streamed simultaneously online. It is the first V&A/RCA History of Design symposium of its kind.

‘Hybrid’ is the word that resonates with our cohort the most. However, we believe that being hybrid is not a weakness stemming from an un-predictable global pandemic. It is a superpower. We finished our MA equipped with new ways of learning, problem-solving, researching and presenting. We learned to be resilient and versatile. We are more prepared to think about ground-breaking ways of recording history.

This would not be possible without the V&A and the RCA staff, especially our tutors. But mainly they were able to join together students who were at the same time in Belgium, China, Portugal, Pakistan and across the UK, and to share their passion for design history. We are enormously grateful for their enthusiasm, which was as vibrant in person as through a computer screen.

Joana Albernaz Delgado



## SPINE OF THE CITY

### The Hong Kong Tramway that transformed Wan Chai District from Depot to Commercial Complex, 1904-1989

This dissertation aims to unravel my personal fascination with studying the built environment in Hong Kong under British Colonial rule (1841-1997). Through studying The Hong Kong Tramway (HKT) as a design element within the history of Hong Kong, I seek to understand the transformations of this landscape, once deemed by the British Foreign Secretary Lord Palmerson to be “a barren island, which will never be mart [market] of trade”.<sup>1</sup> The electric tramway was introduced to the colonial city in 1904 and established as a company in London a few years prior in 1902. The HKT was the first electric-powered public transportation system in Hong Kong, introduced during a time and place in which the traffic was “confined almost entirely to rickshaws”<sup>2</sup> and pull-carts.

The research within it aims to strengthen our relational understanding of the city’s long-term urban planning and speculation with transportation administration, policy, private-sector dealings, and social-economical demands. I explore this against a background of historical events including the successive land reclamation schemes along the Hong Kong north side, post-war restoration resulting from the Japanese Occupation (1941-1945), influx of migration and population growth from Mainland China, British government policies on alleviating urban density and sanitation complications, the fertile growth in Hong Kong’s industry and commerce during the 1950s into the 1980s, and the specific redevelopment of districts on Hong Kong Island. All these events set a crucial foundation to this study of the establishment and impacts of the Hong Kong Tramway within the city of Hong Kong. Furthermore it opens up investigation into the complex interplay between the tram with the society, economy and policy of Hong Kong’s urban development over eight decades.

<sup>1</sup>Frank Welsh, *A History of Hong Kong* (United Kingdom: HarperCollins Publishers, 1997), p.1.

<sup>2</sup>Hong Kong Tramways, Letter from Alfred Dickinson & Co. addressed to Sir C. P. Lucas of the Colonial Office, 5 December 1901.

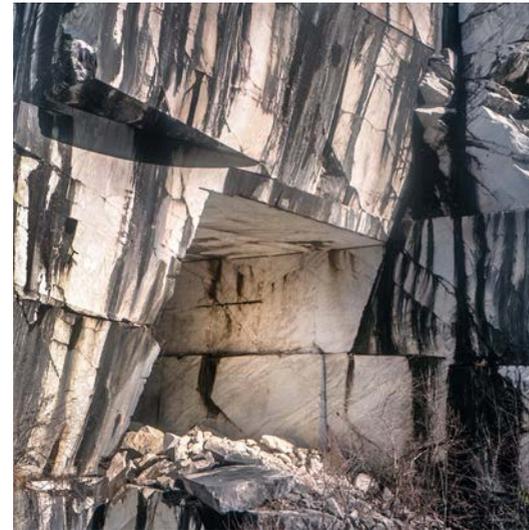


Sharp Street Depot of Hong Kong Tramways Limited in Causeway Bay, c. 1980s.  
Edited by Annie Lye

## Marble Quarry in Campagrina, Italy: A Selected Series of Film Photographs shot on a Rolleiflex with Portra400

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Annie Lye



It was ten summers ago when I first arrived in Pietrasanta, a gem of a medieval town in Tuscany. Surrounding the town are the marble-rich Apuan Alps, favoured by Michelangelo for its Carrara white marble. This is where I spent a month shadowing under sculptor artists Cynthia Sah and Nicolas Bertoux, back in 2012, learning the heritage and artistry of working intimately with stone. Now in 2022, I return with a bag full of medium format film negatives to document the origins of these magnificent slabs of stone and capture the ways in which we humans make their mark on nature's creations.

All photographs © Annie Lye 2022

## CAPPED AND STRAPPED

### Women's Swimming in Britain 1920–1970

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The title of this thesis refers to the design and use of women's swim caps and the role they played in changing notions of femininity and the emancipation/constraint of the female swimmer.

While the swimsuit and swim cap share many of the same issues reflected in the history of women's swimwear generally, my research shows that the swim cap had its own unique history linked to developments in women's hair and beauty cultures, about which this thesis offers interesting new perspectives.

This dissertation brings to light how women's opportunities to swim were countered by patriarchal power and regulation. It is difficult to believe that previously women who had swum in 'fresh' water were deemed to be breaking the law. Subsequently, in the 1920s and 30s rules imposed by many local pool committees restricted the times and days when women could swim and imposed on female swimmers the wearing of caps - this leading to the swim cap becoming a gender-dividing garment that I argue constrained women throughout the period. I explore how such a small item, like a pebble thrown into a pond, was able to illuminate and spread its ripples to encompass its furthest reaches.

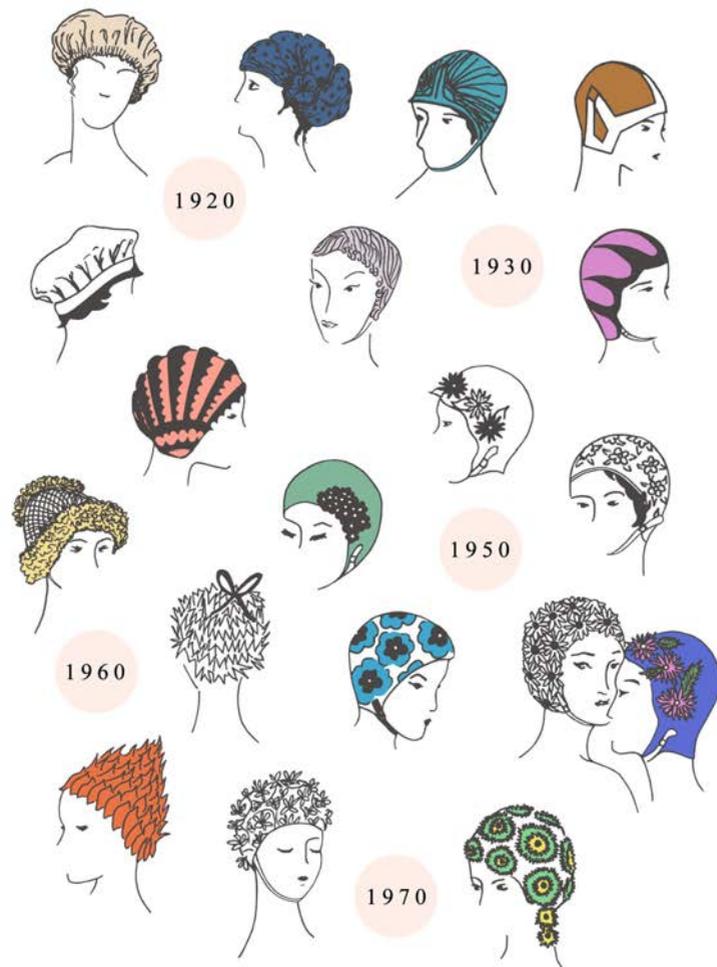
It is interesting to note that at the Tokyo 2020 Olympics, Alice Dearing, the first black woman to represent Great Britain in swimming, was banned by governing officials from wearing a swim cap designed for natural black hair (the Soul Cap). Dearing claims that current caps are unsuitable for those from ethnic minority backgrounds and that they create barriers to swimming.

This highlights how issues around swim caps, the use of them and the potential they have to marginalise and create hierarchies, still continues today in similar and different ways.



Beach Is A New TheatrE #6, 2021,  
© Julia Buruleva

# in the swim ?



Folie de rigueur... a study of women's swim caps 1920 - 1970, 2022  
© Annie Stannard 2022

Jamie Hodgson, Swim Cap, 1965.  
© London College of Fashion:  
The Woolmark Company

This dissertation project uses a material-focused approach to research lucha libre, or Mexican freestyle wrestling, in El Paso, Texas, determining the extent to which performers exert agency within their persona design. The project includes case studies that break down character design from two luchadores by materials relating to the body, hair, and face to contextualize costume within their performance lineages and contemporary obstacles and issues.

The first case study centers on Cassandro, an *exótico* or drag wrestler, who debuted in 1987 and, with a generation of fellow *exóticos*, utilized costume and makeup to signal a change in their performance style. Close object analysis and application of costume theory reveal details that acknowledge labor behind performance and a context that reconsiders the materiality of hair, makeup, and their function for a performer who wrestles unmasked.

The second chapter follows Dulce Tormenta/Sweet Storm through the process of preparing to debut an original character in 2021 and the challenge of working as a live performer through COVID-19, unable to access international resources but finding alternative sources of costume through performance areas with shared historical contexts. This case study also examines vertical integration in a performance context and the extent to which a performer-manager has agency in the design and production process within the constraints of performance tradition. As a whole, the study identifies the objects that enable the transformational process between the self and the character, becoming the physical remains of performance. These have been collected as sites of representation, capturing historical meaning while also using the 'sequin method' to reframe a wider lucha libre history that tends to marginalize *exótico* and luchadora participation.



Omar Morales, Red Gown with Train, 2021.  
El Paso, Texas, El Paso Museum of History.  
© Bernadette Victoria Silva 2021.

This gown featured in *Stories from the Ring* at the El Paso Museum of History is one of several owned by Cassandro and designed by Omar Morales featuring the same design in different colors.

During the course of my research, I visited a few spots in my home city of El Paso, Texas in search of landmarks related to lucha libre. Through the refining and editing process, especially as I began to focus my research on each case study, I found it necessary to exclude some of the photographs I took. However, I decided to include them here as a marker of the history and ties between lucha libre, Mexican culture, and our community on the U.S.-Mexico border.

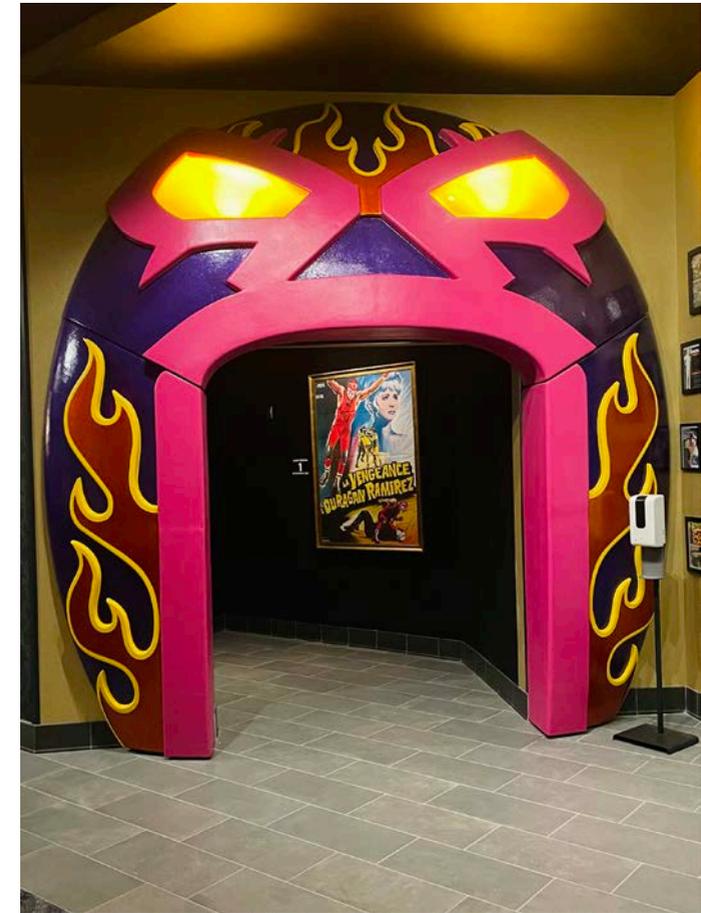
All photographs  
©Bernadette Victoria Silva 2022



I.  
This painting from artists Jesus 'CIMI' Alvarado and Fabian Chairez was created for production on the upcoming Cassandro biopic. Located at Stanton St. and First Ave. in downtown El Paso, it was created for the film but left up after production by the building's owner.



2. This 2015 mural from Jesus ‘CIMP’ Alvarado, Victor ‘Mask’ Casa and Martin ‘Blast’ Zubia celebrates local cultural figures, including the El Pasoan luchador Sin Cara (now Cinta de Oro) and Juarez-born Rocky Star. The public mural can be found at the Roderick Artspace Lofts in downtown El Paso.



3. Opened in 2021, the Alamo Drafthouse East cinema in El Paso features lucha libre-themed decor, including a mask-shaped doorway leading to the main screening room and posters highlighting the subgenre of films starring luchadores that helped bolster their popularity.



4. Though the shop closed in 2021, the Rosa Food Market in El Paso's Lincoln Park neighbourhood retained a poster advertising a November 2020 lucha libre event at the nearby El Paso County Coliseum. The matches were eventually held as drive-thru events, showing another way live performances adjusted to COVID-19 precautions.



5. El Paso's Chicano Park (Lincoln Park), like its counterpart in San Diego, California, utilizes the concrete supports carrying the Interstate highway as an art space commemorating Mexican-American culture and the local community. The paintings depict a range of subjects, including Mayan pyramids, lowrider cars, activist Dolores Huerta and the United Farm Workers, and Eddie Guerrero, a local wrestler who started in lucha libre and became a popular WWE figure.

## COPYRIGHT, PHOTOGRAPHY & ART Commercial and Cultural Effects in Britain, 1862-1878

Bessie Morrissey-Murin

The genesis for thinking about copyright and its intersection with artworks originated from writing another paper that looked at the chain of reproductive methods used at the South Kensington Museum. The object of focus was a photograph of the plaster cast of Trajan's Column. The proliferation of plaster casts within significant European collections during the mid to late nineteenth century was encouraged by the Convention for Promoting Universally Reproductions of Works of Art for the Benefit of Museums of All Countries drawn up by Henry Cole to coincide with the Paris Exposition of 1867.

What is striking is that while these examples set by museums showed a commitment to share reproductions, including photographs, with the public, intellectual property was becoming a dominant force within the commercial art market. My dissertation looks at when photography first became a copyrightable medium – and how this intersected with the Victorian art market and the public's appetite for reproductions alongside changing concepts of authorship, originality and property.

In the middle of the nineteenth century, the booming contemporary art market contributed to calls for copyright protection to be given to all works of fine art (engravings had first been granted protection in 1735 and sculpture in 1798). Part of an older narrative involving authors' rights for literary works that had begun in 1710 with the Statute of Anne, copyright protection was extended to painting, drawing and photography in 1862 under the Fine Art Copyright Act. Although the inclusion of photography within the act was controversial, it was taken up enthusiastically by many photographers.

New technology transformed how reproductions of artworks were consumed, and those working in older reproductive methods such as engraving had to grapple with the growing market for cheaper copies made by mechanical processes, such as lithography and photography. In the 1860s, this led to a series of cases that involved photographs of engravings being reproduced and sold illegally, to the chagrin of publishers in the printing industry. Prominent legal disputes from this decade highlighting



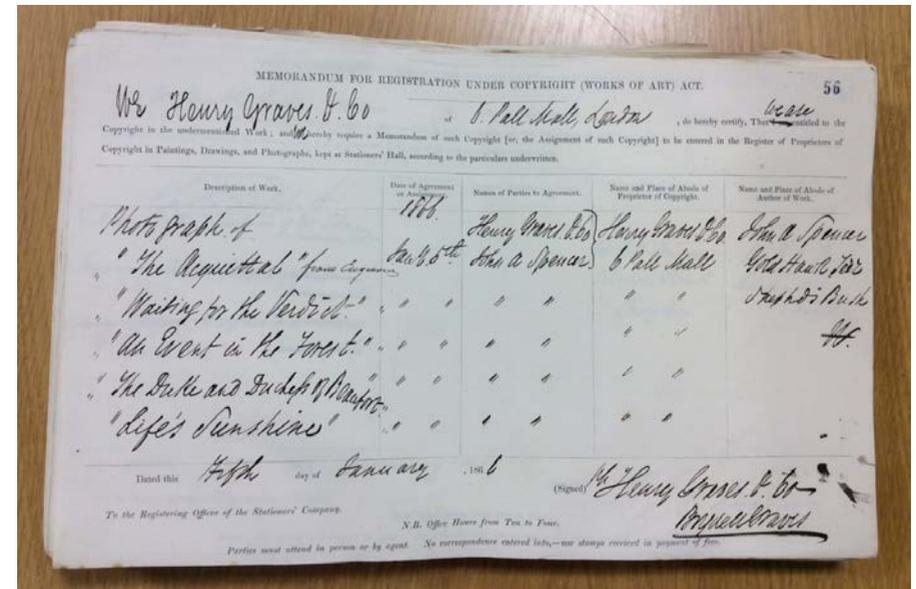
Bessie Morrissey-Murin, Boxes of  
copyright entries from COPY 1, 2021.

the issues faced by fine art publishers include *Gambart v. Powell* (1862), *Gambart v. Ball* (1863) & *Graves v. Walker* (1869).

My research focuses on the commercial practice of reproducing artworks through photography and registering them under the new copyright legislation. By doing empirical exploration into this body of copyright registrations now held at the National Archives, I found that the litigation often associated with photography and the Fine Art Copyright Act was the exception rather than the rule. The evidence supplied in this dissertation points to a much larger narrative within the history of photography regarding the commercial practice of reproducing artworks.



Copyright registration form for 'Photograph of drawing by Edward Burne Jones. Study of head of female looking over shoulder', 1878. COPY 1/42/187 National Archives



Copyright registration form for:

1. 'Photograph of 'The Acquittal', from engraving'.
  2. 'Photograph of 'Waiting for the Verdict', from engraving'.
  3. 'Photograph of 'An Event in the Forest', from engraving'.
  4. 'Photograph of 'The Duke and Duchess of Beaufort', from engraving'.
  5. 'Photograph of 'Lifes Sunshine', from engraving'.
- 1866, COPY 1/10/56 National Archives

All photographs  
© Bessie Morrissey-Murin 2022

## Q&A WITH OUR COHORT:

The Persian carpet

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Hair ornament, made by Philippe Wolfers, 1905-7, Belgium. Museum no. M.11-1962

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Peacock Muff

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David Statue [replica]

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The Edith Head/Mitchell Leisen 'Lady in the Dark' dress

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Gold Posy Ring (906-1871)

This is extremely difficult, but for now I would say the hanging scroll of samurai getting dressed (FE.55-2015)

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Hello Kitty Rice Cooker

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The stage design model of Act III of the Swan Lake, which is in the Theatre and Performance gallery

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Robin Hood Gardens facade

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Balenciaga Evening Dress February 1962 (T.28-1974)

## WHAT IS YOUR MOST COVETED V&A OBJECT?\*

Either The Almain Armourer's Album by Jacob Halder, the Portrait of Madame de Pompadour by François Boucher or the "mock-croc" platform shoes by Vivienne Westwood

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Lotus-shaped bowl with Buddhist symbols and Sanskrit characters, 1725-35 Yongzheng period

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The miniatures

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Renaissance Revival Dragon Pendant

A 19th century museum bench. The stories each bench hides under the scribbles, marks and chewing gums fascinate me. Thinking about the millions of different people that sat on it in different times is mind-blowing. It is not very easy to steal though, but it would be lovely in the entrance of my house

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A Kelly bag

\* This question was originally phrased, 'What object would you steal from the V&A?'. We decided to rethink this due to the contested nature of several of the museum's objects, and our disapproval of the act of stealing.

## A CASE FOR GLASS

### A Proposal for an Alternative Understanding of Glass Gems in the Seventeenth Century

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Cecilia Seilern und Aspang

My dissertation is an exploration and proposal for an alternate understanding of the use of glass gems in jewellery during the seventeenth century. Glass gems, also referred to as paste or strass, are cut and polished glass pieces, often set in jewellery, to simulate natural gems. They are a highly under-researched field potentially owing to their status as, seemingly, uninteresting imitations. But the use of these gems, in exceptional jewellery pieces, raises the question of whether the narrative surrounding the use of glass gems has been oversimplified throughout the historiography and placed in a contemporary context, wherein glass gems are defined solely as cheaper imitations of natural gems.

In my work I propose a need to re-examine glass gems in the seventeenth century by paying close attention to these pieces as objects of technical knowledge, design and innovation. An interdisciplinary range of key methodologies, coming from design history and material culture studies, provides a framework for thinking through a diverse range of primary resources, which include seventeenth century recipe books and jewellery, as well as textual references to glass gems. By building an interdisciplinary narrative, my findings place the use of glass gems in jewellery in a new light wherein they can be understood as being objects of elevated imitation, appreciated for their ingenuity.



Necklace with blue glass gems, Unknown, Europe, mid 17th century.  
© Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

The influence of ‘Big Tech’—information technology companies with aspirations of global influence, dominance, and monopoly—is a prominent topic in both academic scholarship and popular discourse. This influence is increasingly criticized for its deleterious effect. While such approaches tend to describe the harms of Big Tech, by criticizing its ideologies and practices, relatively little attention has been paid to alternative ways of designing. This dissertation examines alternative web design practices from 2005–2021 within the Anglophone internet to understand: How can critiques of Big Tech be understood not by examining what practitioners are against, but also what they are for? What ideologies are present within alternative web design practices, and how are they articulated within their designed artifacts?

By examining two web design communities—the amateur ‘handmade web’ and the professional ‘sustainable web’—this dissertation uncovers significant convergences between their ideologies, despite operating within different economic contexts. First, in contrast to perceptions of the internet as purely digital and immaterial (as represented by the metaphor of ‘the cloud’), both communities emphasize the physical, material, and environmental implications of the web. Second, they position themselves against attitudes of inevitable—and intrinsically desirable—technological progress and continuous economic growth. Instead, both communities employ a strategic form of nostalgia that draws on the style, aesthetics, technologies, and processes of early web history—to inform and sharpen contemporary design practices.

More broadly, this dissertation advocates for the utility of material culture approaches in understanding the seemingly immaterial web; the significance of web design history to contemporary design and environmental histories, as well as science and technology studies (STS) subjects.

How can critiques of Big Tech be understood not by examining what practitioners are against, but also what they are for?

What ideologies are present within alternative web design practices, and how are they articulated within their designed artifacts?

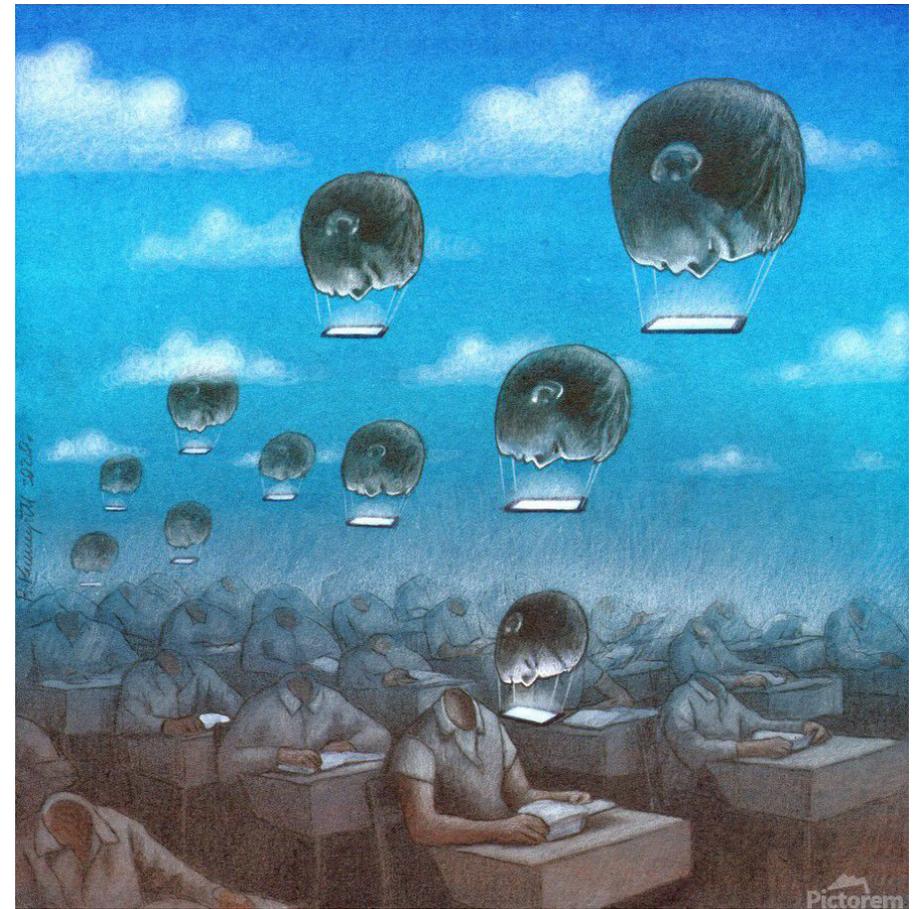
### From Self-experience to E-xperience Digital Technology Ideologies and Design Process of a Pedagogy of Interaction

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The time spent by children on digital technologies combined with the accelerating effect of their introduction into the educational sphere brought by the Covid-19 pandemic has raised anxiety and reluctance towards the said technologies. Through academic studies and popular discourse, it is understood that the principal reason behind this anxiety is due to parents feeling outdated by the rapid technological innovations thus leading to a loss of control over the exposure of their children to digital technology and its security and privacy risks. Teachers are reluctant to the introduction of digital technologies within the educational system as they feel assisted, replaced or overwhelmed by the new skills required to handle them. This raising anxiety has conducted several governments to develop laws and restrictions concerning the use of digital technology within the home and the education.

Based on the research question: how do designers respond to technological anxiety while supporting and incorporating a pedagogy of learning through child-focused technology in their practice? This dissertation examines how the children of the current generation, referred to as digital natives, raise the attention on the lasting impact of technology on future generations. Through the study of a range of scientific research and various testimonies and in order to answer the research question, this dissertation uncovers significant ideological divergences. Digital technology is first considered to cause the learner to be de-trained rather than trained, to be distributed, dispersed and disseminated. Secondly, a positive impact on learning through the development of new skills via digital technology is considered.

The decisive contributions of Montessori and Dewey through the introduction of active learning pedagogy has influenced new fields of application for the notions of self-learning, tangibility and interaction. This has been achieved via the creation of tangible digital learning technologies by designers and researchers. Thus bringing forward the emergence of a new sector of design: interaction design.



Odloty, Illustration by Pawel Kuczynski  
via <<https://www.pictorem.com/312952/odloty.html>>

In a broader context this dissertation advocates for the necessity of incorporating digital technology history into the field of design history where academic scholarship on the subject is lacking.

## Fabula Box

Soft model realised with cardboard during a user research session, early 2020, conducted and designed by Cyrienne Buffet

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Cyrienne Buffet



This image is from my self directed design project created during my third year at Central Saint Martins. This project is based on the research hypothesis: sleeping is related to the decrease of alertness and reactivity (being fully aware and attentive and wide awake). Feeling emotionally and physically secure provides the right conditions for the release of the child's conscious mind. However, children tend to avoid these situations in order to stay awake. Design could foster the physical and emotional security of the child to ease the sleeping process.

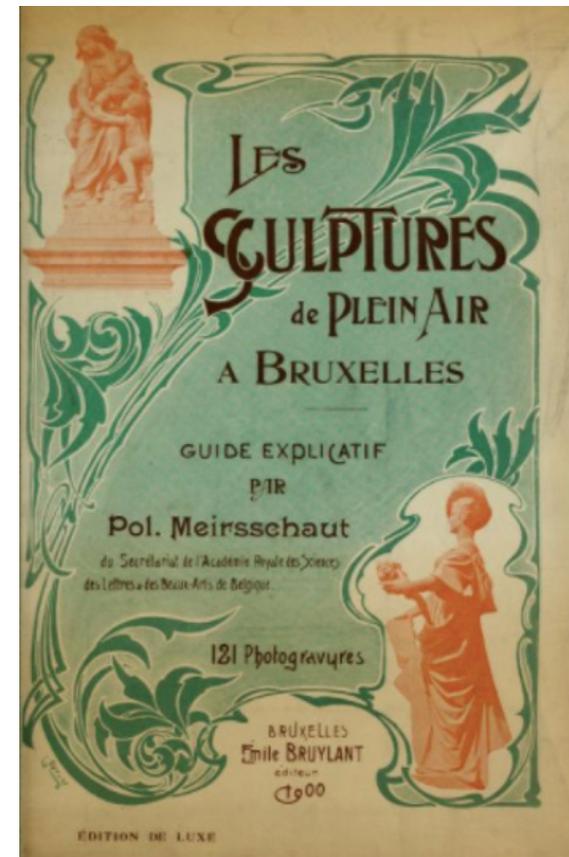
The Fabula Box has been designed to foster the physical and emotional security of the children to ease their sleeping process. This multifunctional design focus on recreating the bond between the parents and their children by developing their creativity and communication. Its content encourages the children to create a world with 'funny monsters' and architectural elements that will then be used by their parents to create a bedtime story and help the children during their sleeping process.

## The Publication about Public Sculptures in Brussels as a Product of its Time

This dissertation was initiated by one specific object, a book that was printed in 1900 by the publisher and politician Emile Bruylant (1863-?) and written by Pol Meirsschaut (1845-1916) who was a secretary of the Académie Royale des sciences, des lettres et des beaux-arts de Belgique. This publication is titled *Les sculptures de plein air à Bruxelles* and contains sixteen walks enabling the viewing of public sculptures in Brussels. This is the only book from that period about this specific topic. The first chapter gives an overview of the urban evolution of the city. The second chapter of this dissertation examines the design, production and use of the guide. Which uncovered for example that the guide was created and aimed to be accessible for local, young people, and teachers. This guide could be used during a walk, to look up specific information and to prepare for a walk.

The third chapter deals with what the object can indicate about the use of public sculptures in Brussels in 1900. It was discovered that the creation of the guide was influenced by a network of politicians, sculptors, bankers and the Belgian monarchy. This network was closely connected to the rule of the Congo Free State, the urbanisation of Brussels, and the creation of public sculptures in the city and presumably demanded the creation of the guide because sculptures in public spaces in Brussels offered the opportunity to share patriotic values with large audiences and helped to present Belgium as a strong imperial power with a rich history.

The final chapter explores the insights that this guide offers into the use of public sculptures with colonial values and used this as a starting point to help contribute to the decolonisation debate. The guide does discuss thirteen statues that represent colonial mindsets and one portrait of King Leopold II that are located in parks and boulevards all over the city. Some of these sculptures presented Europe as a superior and dominant power that was obliged to 'civilise' African people with the teaching of Christian norms and values. On the other hand, ethnographic sculptures inspired by Orientalism demonstrate the fascination of the West with, among other things, the African continent. The decoration of the Venetian staircase of the Royal Palace indicates that Leopold II also



Cover of the publication *Les sculptures de plein air à Bruxelles: guide explicatif* (Brussels: Emile Bruylant, 1900), by Pol Meirsschaut, which was used as the starting point for this research. Photographed by Eline Vandenbosch

had a great fascination for this continent. This dissertation has shown that there is lack of knowledge on public sculptures in Brussels and therefore this research wants to be an inspiration to continue exploring the original context of public sculptures.

This walk is based on the research of a publication that was created in 1900 that listed walks to view public sculptures in Brussels. In that period Belgium was under the reign of its second king, Leopold II (1865-1909) who wanted to transform Brussels into a prestigious capital with the creation of parks, avenues, squares and new districts that were decorated with sculptures. The city also chose to undertake prestigious projects such as the creation of the Palace of Justice. This building was designed by Joseph Poelart (1817-1879), completed in 1883 and was the largest building in the world. The first sculpture of this walk depicts Marcus Tullius Cicéron (1st and 2nd century BC) and is part of four statues that were placed here to refer to the origins of the Western legal system. Many sculptures in the city are inspired by the Greek and Roman period. Furthermore [sculpture 20](#) depict Godfrey of Bouillon (11th century) and was another prestigious project. The statue was created during the reign of Leopold I and was in that time the largest casted sculpture in Brussels. During the reign of Leopold II plaques were added to the plinth of the statue.

[Sculpture 2](#) is part of the Petit Sablon, a square that was created in 1890 by the architect Hendrik Beyaert (1823-1894). The square is surrounded by forty-eight statues that represent the guilds. In this city, there are several groups of sculptures that glorify crafts and this theme also returns in [sculpture 8](#), which depicts painting. This sculpture is also part of a collection of sculptures depicting various crafts. On the other hand, the Petit Sablon was created to improve the quality of the life of citizens. In this period, more people had access to leisure activities, whereby people went to participate in promenades in squares, avenues or parks, shopped in the covered galleries ([sculptures 8 and 17](#)), visited a museum and went to the theatre like the Monnaie ([sculpture 11](#)).

Other sculptures were also used to highlight the importance of art and science, such as [sculpture 3](#), which represents the Flemish art, and [sculpture 23](#), which depicts the scientist Adolphe Quetelet (1796-1874). [Sculpture 23](#) is located in front of the academy palace. This building houses the académie Royale des sciences, des lettres et des beaux-arts de Belgique. The author of the publication was the secretary of this

institution. The research has revealed that a network of influential people such as king Leopold II, sculptors and the mayor of Brussels Charles Buls (1837-1914) were presumably behind the creation of the guide.

Furthermore, there are also sculptures that refer to the Belgian revolution that took place in 1830. Congress column ([sculpture 4](#)) presented Belgium as a young and important western nation. King Leopold I (1790-1865) was depicted at the top of this column. [Sculptures 6 and 7](#) commemorate the victims of the Belgian revolution. It is also interesting to note that [sculptures 21 and 22](#) were damaged during this revolution. Under the reign of Leopold II, it was decided to restore or replace several statues from the Brussels park, including these. The appreciation of heritage also returns in the neo-Gothic movement where buildings were restored to have a more Gothic appearance than their original state. [Sculptures 16 and 14](#) are two examples of this and were added in the 19th century. [Sculpture 13](#) is a commemorative plaque to thank mayor Charles Buls for the protection of the Grand Place and for his support with the restoration of the buildings on this market.

[Sculptures 5, 9 and 10](#) were included in this walk because they are examples of sculptures located on the facade of buildings with different functions. [Sculpture 5](#) is part of the facade of a bank, the National Bank of Belgium. [Sculpture 9](#) represents a group of statues decorating a hotel. By 1900 there had been a revolution in transport that made it possible for foreign tourists to visit cities such as Brussels. [Sculpture 10](#) is located on the facade of a private house.

In this short overview, I wanted to finish by listing that king Leopold II was depicted in [sculptures 19 and 24](#). Today, there is a debate about this king and the policies he used when he ruled his personal colony the Congo Free state (1885-1908). [Sculptures 12, 15 and 18](#) are examples of how Africans and the African continent were viewed between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries. On the one hand, these depictions indicate a fascination with non-Western civilisation. On the other hand, they legitimise a system of exploitation of the African people and their wealth.

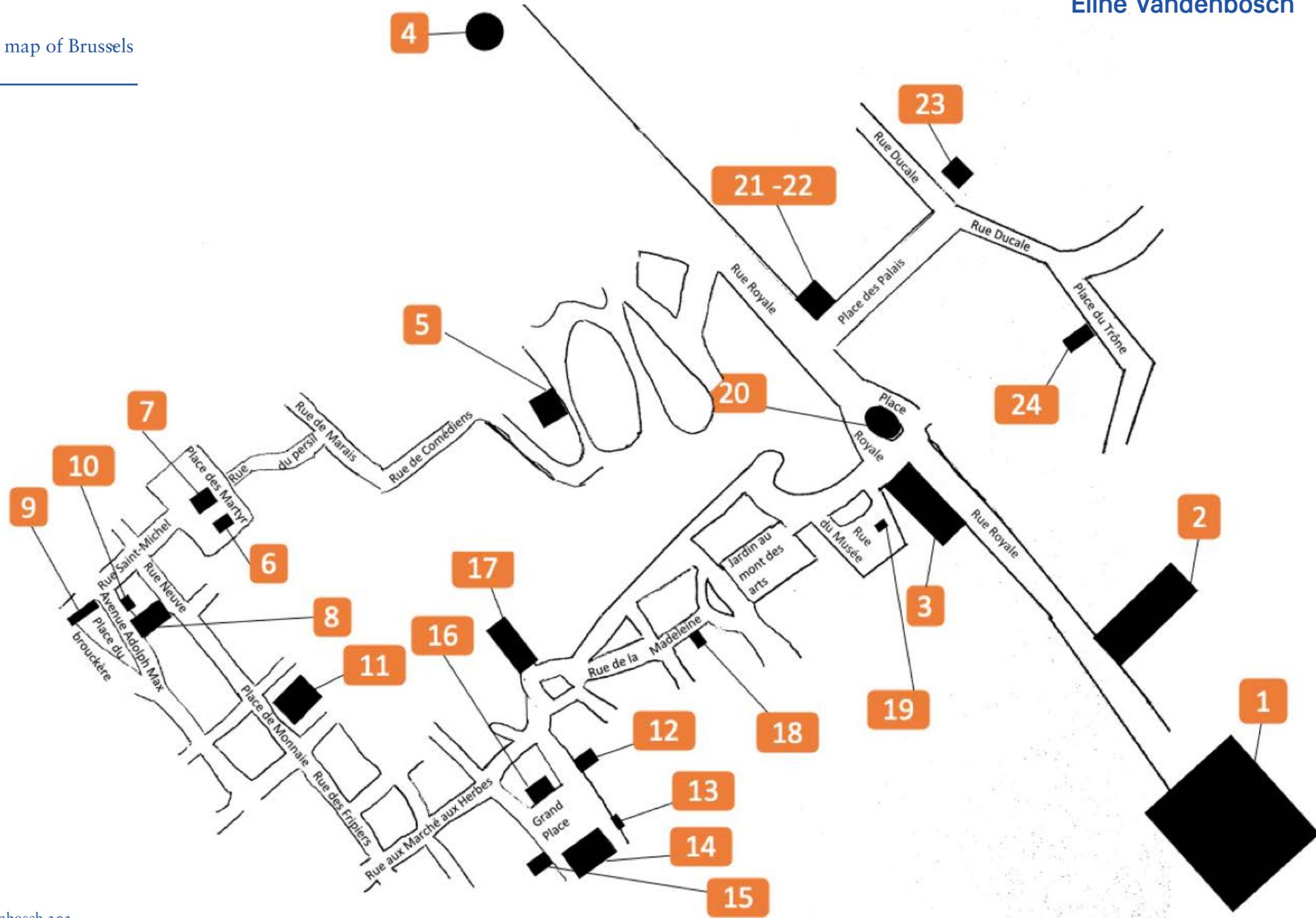
List of Sculptures



1. Antoine Félix Bouré, *Marcus Tullius Cicéron*, 1883, Palace of Justice (Place Poelaert 1, 1000 Brussels)
2. Albert Desenfans, *The Slater*, 1883 (Square de petit Sablon, 1000 Brussels)
3. Juliaan Dillens, *Flemish art*, 1876-1880, Royal Museum of Fine Arts of Belgium (Rue de la Régence 3, 1000 Brussels)
4. Joseph Poelaert, *Congress Column*, 1850-1859 (Place du Congès, 1000 Brussels)
5. Egide Mélot and Léopold Wiener, *National bank*, 1863-1865 (Rue du Bois Sauvage 10, 1000 Brussels)
6. Paul Du Bois and Henri Van de Velde, *Le Comte de Merode*, 1838-1848
8. Joseph Bertheux, *Painting*, 1881-1882 (Passage du Nord, 1000 Brussels)
9. Louis Samain, *Hotel Continental*, 1879 (Place de Brouckère 41, 1000 Brussels)
10. George Houtstont, *Mercure*, 1872-1876 Hier is 't in den Kater en de Kat (Avenue Adolph Max 1, 1000, Brussels)
11. Eugène Simonis, *tympanum of la Monnaie*, 1854 (Place de la Monnaie, 1000 Brussels)
12. *Two caryatids*, 1701
13. Victor Rousseau and Victor Horta, *Plaque for Charles Buls*, 1899.
14. Charles Fraikin, *Detail of the portal of the City hall*, 1846
15. Juliaan Dillens, *Africa*, 1883-1884
16. Paul De Vigne, *Karel V*, 1893 (Grand Place, 1000 Brussels)
17. Joseph Jaquet, *Brabant*, 1846-1847 (Galerie Saint-Hubert, 1000 Brussels)
18. *Medallion of Africa*, 17th century (Rue de la Madeleine 61, 1000 Brussels)
19. Joseph Bertheux, *Painting*, 1881-1882 (Place du Musée, 1000 Brussels)
20. Eugene Simonis, *Godfrey of Bouillon*, 1848 (Place Royale, 1000 Brussels)
- 21-22. Gilles-Lambert Godecharle and Pierre Puyenbroeck, *Hunting*, 1782 (Park of Brussels, 1000 Brussels)
23. Charles Fraikin, *Monument of Adolphe Quetelet*, 1880 (Rue Ducale 1, 1000 Brussels)
24. Thomas Vinçotte, *Monument Leopold II*, 1926 (Place du Trône, 1000 Brussels)

All photographs  
©Eline Vandenbosch 2022

Corresponding map of Brussels



## HIDDEN JAPANESE MEN'S DRESS

### Expressions of the Public and Private Self, 1850–1945

Euphemia Franklin

The most spectacular items of dress are not always the most obvious. In the Edo period (1603–1868), sumptuary laws prohibited extravagant displays of luxury. As a result, men's dress became increasingly austere on the outside, but could contain dazzling layers on the inside. My dissertation draws attention to decorative items of Japanese men's dress that were deliberately hidden from outside view, through four key object types: (i) *nagajuban*, or under kimono; (ii) hand-painted *haori* jacket linings; (iii) *hikeshibanten* firefighting coats; and (iv) *senninbari* 'thousand-person stitch' sashes worn by soldiers under military uniforms. These objects are unified by their hiddenness, but contrast in the ways in which they express the public and private self of the wearer.

The public and private self links to the Japanese idea of *honne* and *tatemae*. Each of the items studied speak to the expression of the public, outward-facing self of the wearer (*tatemae*), as well as their private, inward-facing self (*honne*). Through exploring the duality of public and private, I analyse the complex psychology behind hidden men's dress. Each object-type demonstrates how the public and private self can take a material form through items of dress.

Between January and February 2022, I travelled to Japan to conduct primary research. Through meeting with curators, researchers and craftspeople in Tokyo, Kyoto and Kyotango, I was able to deepen my understanding of men's kimono and *senninbari* – their historic contexts and the extraordinary ways they were made. Object analysis in the UK also proved highly insightful. Key findings include the discovery of hitherto unknown information on a *nagajuban* in the National Museum of Japanese History's collection and of a *senninbari* in the Imperial War Museum's collection.



Utagawa Kunisada, *Sumidagawa Kamida Sekkei*, 1828–9. Woodblock print. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Kabuki actor walks along the snowy banks of the Sumida river, lifting his kimono to reveal the fabulous diamond-patterned layer underneath, while dodging a large, threatening snowball.

## (Flea) Market Research: Serendipitous Discoveries in Kyoto's Outdoor Markets

Euphemia Franklin

In 2018/19 I was lucky enough to study design at the Kyoto Institute of Technology and the rather liberal timetable allowed for plenty of local exploration. One of the greatest pleasures of living in Kyoto is the monthly flea markets, or *kottoichi*, held in various shrines and temples across the city. The big two are the antiques markets at Toji Temple (in the south, near Kyoto Station) and Kitanotenmangu Shrine (west of the Imperial Palace). The other smaller, but equally delightful, ones include the handicrafts market at the Heian Shrine and Chionji Temple, as well as the occasional vegan market at the Shimogamo Shrine. During my time I accumulated many objects, which significantly contributed to my luggage when I returned to London, but continue to give me immense joy nonetheless. Such objects include a large yellow bird (possibly a kiwi) made from wood, two moulds for making *wagashi* (Japanese confectionery), a ceramic peach and several highly breakable plates.

The key with Kyoto's many flea markets is to remember which day each market is held. This information tends to be scattered across a mix of flyers in shop entrances, Facebook pages and tourist blogs. For the really small markets, some with only four or five vendors, one would never know they existed without hearing about them word-of-mouth. Some are fairly straightforward – 'every 25th of the month' – while others require a bit more thinking – 'every second Saturday'. For anyone travelling to Kyoto, it is certainly worth checking the flea market schedules before booking travel, as it is a real shame to miss out on the experience of rummaging through the many things one finds there.

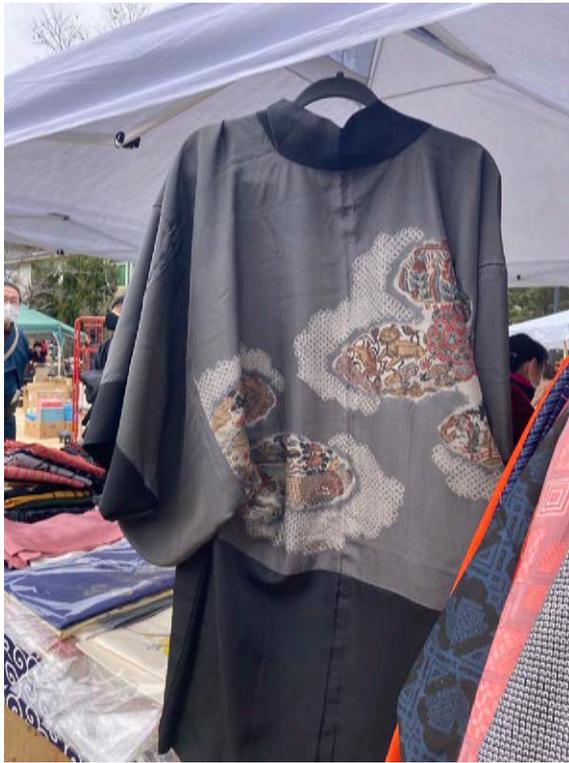
Earlier this year (2022), between January and February, I was able to return to Japan to conduct research for my dissertation. This was at a time when Covid restrictions were still very strict in Japan, and I was required to quarantine for fourteen days upon arrival, on top of completing a huge amount of paperwork. Despite the worries of pre-flight PCR tests and making complex arrangements, the trip was truly magical and made a world of difference to my research. During my seven weeks in Japan, I made time to go to Kyoto to meet with craftspeople to conduct interviews. I also made sure to go to the flea markets.



A typical scene in the Heian Shrine antiques market – a mixture of ceramic objects, glassware and figurines. Some vendors price each item, but for most one has to ask the vendor directly. One must never dress too luxuriously at a flea market. It is important also never to let them know if you realise something is worth a great deal more than they have priced it!

There is endless fun to be had discovering things in the flea market. Without any expectations for finding things related to my dissertation, I went to a flea market that was being held outside the Heian Shrine. I was amazed, but perhaps not totally surprised, to find a selection of relevant objects. This included sashiko-stitched cotton hanten jackets, much like the ones firefighters of the Edo and Meiji periods would have worn; men's haori overcoats with brilliant decorated silk linings; and scraps of fabrics with Imperial motifs from the 1930s and 40s (this links to a section where I write about nationalistic agendas being reflected in the inner layers of men's clothing).

At the flea market you can pick things up, feel them, sniff them, turn things inside out and study the objects. This kind of handling would surely be frowned upon in a museum setting, but is encouraged



A man's *haori* (overcoat), turned inside out to reveal the fabulous lining. This one is not hand painted, and it most likely from the 1950s onwards.



A *sashiko*-stitched hanten work jacket. This was not used for firefighting, but more likely a promotional jacket worn by a business owner or their employee. Still, the materials, shape and techniques are the same. I was able to try on the item to feel how a firefighting jacket would have felt, and gain a sense of the the rigidity of the fabric and construction.

by market vendors who want to attract customers. They may not be historians with a capital H, but they are extremely knowledgeable and can often share stories with you about how things were used and where they came from. It is also interesting to consider the way things are priced in the markets as a small indication of how they are valued today. This is not an exact science and of course, not all, or any, of what vendors say might be accurate, so one should be cautious about citing them as references. After all, they want you to buy their wares. Still, conversations and encounters in the flea market can be treated as a form of wider reading, allowing one to think about an object's history in a highly evocative setting.

Seeing an object in a flea market is markedly different to seeing the same thing in a museum display case. Perhaps it is the juxtaposition of all the different objects together, the lack of captioning, the hustle and bustle of pensioners haggling, or the delicious scent of freshly ground coffee (for it is very usual to find artisanal coffee vendors at markets in Kyoto) that swirl into a feeling of stepping out of a time machine. Indeed, the history of Japan can be found in the flea markets. And so, to paraphrase Walt Whitman – The untold object by life and land ne'er granted, Now Design Historian, sail though forth to seek and find!



In the first half of my dissertation I wrote about *omoshirogara* or 'novelty patterns' in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Many had nationalistic imagery relating to Japan's activities in the First and Second Sino-Japanese War and WWII. These fabric samples in the flea market are the kinds of *omoshirogara* patterns that can be found inside the linings of men's jackets and under-kimono at the time.



This is a lovely discovery that is not related to my dissertation research – an elementary schoolboy's backpack (or *randoseru*) decorated with a hand-painted illustration of a baseball player. The vendor told me this would have been from the Showa era (1926–1989), most likely the 1950s or 60s. I absolutely love this personalisation and like to imagine the pride with which its original owner would have walked to school with this on his back, and the care with which it was kept for all these years.

## WHY WE MEND

### A Contemporary History of Garment Mending, examining Techniques, Teaching and Emotional Connection

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Hannah Heaf

The act of mending holds a nuanced position within fashion and culture, often reflecting societal values in its application. This research aims to explore how mending is influenced by, and impacts upon design. While historically the mending of garments has been connected to low socio-economic status and gendered domesticity, in a contemporary context it indicates environmentalist, subversive and postmodern aesthetic values. Motivation behind the practice has varied greatly over time and the implicit association to gender, class and social responsibility has placed repair within the arena of identity politics and commodity activism. This research will trace historical instances of mending, specifically the way mending skills have been circulated, in both global and intimate person-to-person exchanges over time. This epistemological approach, examining the transfer of craft knowledge and attitudes to material literacy, aims to situate mending within a broader examination of hierarchies of knowledge, as well as exploring the value of haptic practice. The visible / invisible dichotomy within mending impacts the way in which repair is designed and received, and this research explores how the increase in visible repair as an aesthetic device has introduced questions of utility and authenticity. The collaborative aspect of repair is also addressed within this study, as the connection between the original maker, the wearer and the mender create unique aesthetic and emotional effects in objects. This emotive and narrative worth, which is added to an object through repair has led to a redressing of value in a designed object. This research aims to identify the ways in which mending and repair interact with design ideology and consumer culture, allowing for an analysis of the place repair holds within the fashion system, as well as possible future application of the practice.



Hannah Heaf, Mended denim Jeans, 2021  
©Hannah Heaf 2021.

## From the Archives – Bonnie Cashin Leather Trousers

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Hannah Heaf

As historians we rely on archives, with the V&A collections being one of the richest areas of research. During the global covid 19 pandemic accessing archives took on a new reality, and hunting for digitised material became the new norm. Take this as an ode to online archives, especially public ones, which allow inquisitive minds to circle back at any time of day or night to take another look. In ‘normal’ times we would only delve into archives in working hours, stuck on uncomfy chairs in badly lit basements. Instead, I found myself flitting back and forth from collections in the spur of the moment – I’d be boiling the kettle or watering the plants... but let’s just see what happens if I type X into this search bar, or Y into that one.

This is also an ovation to the designers who have hoarded each stage of their work, and squirreled it away knowing researchers like us will see their sketches as gold mines and their doodles as hidden treasure. One of these designers was Bonnie Cashin, who made sure that not only she herself kept an extensive archive of her work, but within her lifetime she networked with curators and educators, ensuring that prestigious institutions acquired her pieces for their own collections.

What follows is an extract of the essay I wrote on a pair of Bonnie Cashin leather trousers, which are held at the V&A. This research was heavily supported by Cashin’s personal archive held and digitised by UCLA, this essay was awarded the V&A bursary for studies in fashion.

It must be noted that the breadth of ephemera surviving from the career of Bonnie Cashin is vast, and has been purposefully collected and archived since she was still early in her career. Cashin began this practice when the ‘Cashin look’ was still in its infancy, exemplifying the confidence she had in her designs. She had a close relationship with Michelle Murphy, Director of the Industrial Laboratory at the Brooklyn Museum of Art, who collected Cashin’s work for the museum for nearly a decade, a relationship which Cashin claimed was instrumental in her decision to continue her career within the fashion industry. Cashin even wrote to her clients in 1959, asking them to return their garments to her once they were no longer in use so that she could donate them to museum collections. It is unsurprising therefore that many of her pieces



*Ensemble*, by Bonnie Cashin,  
manufactured by Sills & Co, 1959.  
Worn and given by the Countess of Avon  
© Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

Turning to Cashin's notes, often scribbled at the side or corner of her design sheets, we can begin to speculate on how she wanted women to experience her garments, or perhaps even how she intended to market the unfamiliar shapes and textures. The notes imbue a personality, and some context to the designs.

are also housed in university archives, such as FIT, and UCLA. Cashin intended her work to be influential, and positioned it within institutions to achieve this goal. Cashin even kept an expansive archive herself, which included many 'Bonnie Cashin originals', a line of one-off pieces designed and made in her 'secret labs'. This collecting and archiving continued throughout her life, including garments, sketches, essays and colour swatches, and after her death her personal collection was entrusted to design historian Stephanie Lake, a close friend and biographer of Cashin.

The trousers central to this essay were worn and donated to the V&A by the Countess of Avon, Anne Clarissa Eden. A member of British high society, Eden was the niece of Winston Churchill and wife of Anthony Eden, Prime minister of England 1955-1957. The Countess exemplifies Cashin's luxury consumer, and they may have even moved in the same circles, as Cashin was involved with a British civil servant at the time, and the Countess had many close friends within the arts and film circles in which Cashin moved. One such friend of Clarissa's was Cecil Beaton, who organised a fashion exhibition at the V&A in 1971, which is perhaps how the V&A acquired the piece.

It is likely the Countess bought the trousers in London, as there was a Cashin concession located inside of Liberty's department store from around 1960. Both Anthony and Clarissa Eden were known for being stylish and fashion forward, in fact Clarissa admits in her memoir that it was Anthony's trousers which first attracted her to him. This enthusiasm for fashion seems to explain her readiness to explore innovative designers such as Cashin.

Turning to Cashin's notes, often scribbled at the side or corner of her design sheets, we can begin to speculate on how she wanted women to experience her garments, or perhaps even how she intended to market the unfamiliar shapes and textures. The notes imbue a personality, and some context to the designs. This seems to be influenced by her time as a costume designer, in which she would be designing for a character, therefore as a ready to wear designer she created a character for her customers. On one of her design sketches she has jotted 'my husband likes me to wear the pants around the house – says I'm built for them – I fix the cocktails and he builds the hi-fi'. We can imagine that perhaps a similar scene played out in the Eden Home.

# WHICH ICONIC V&A OBJECT ARE YOU?



Devised by Hannah Heaf

# WHICH ICONIC V&A OBJECT ARE YOU? – ANSWERS

A



## Great Bed Of Ware

You are just like the Great bed of Ware... a one of a kind! Made in 1590, and flamboyantly carved and decorated, this bed has made an impression on everyone to come across it. Even getting a mention in Shakespeare's play *A Twelfth Night*.

Purchased with Art Fund support  
© Victoria and Albert Museum, London

B



## Sheep Jumper

Sally Muir's iconic 1979 sheep jumper design has been spotted on Princess Diana and Elton John, and is a reminder that even if you're the black sheep you can still do it in style.

© Victoria and Albert Museum, London

C



## David

This replica of Michelangelo's David made his way to the V&A in 1857, as a gift to Queen Victoria from the grand duke of Tuscany. Just like David, you are larger than life – and make quite the impression.

© Victoria and Albert Museum, London

D



## Queen Victoria's Diamond Coronet

Designed for Queen Victoria by Prince Albert in 1840, their wedding year, this coronet is absolutely dazzling – just like you!

Purchased through the generosity of William & Judith, Douglas and James Bollinger as a gift to the Nation and the Commonwealth  
© Victoria and Albert Museum, London

## DE-SCRIBING MUSEUM SEATS

### Design and Art in the V&A's Raphael Cartoons Galleries

This image depicts a scene from 'A Modern Pilgrim's Progress', a 1954 picture story adapted from John Bunyan's famous work. It catches our eye with the silent script it conveys. The scene is performed at the Raphael Court in the V&A and is framed by Raphael's Cartoon 'The Healing of the Lame Man', which is being inspected by two visitors. A man sits next to a woman. He looks to the camera, she looks down, both on the verge of turning around and looking at each other. The visual narrative is so powerful and the Cartoon so impressive that the largest elements at the front, the settees, pass almost unnoticed.

The photograph is clearly staged, but it contains a visual parable about the relevance given to museum seats. Museum seating has been an invisible subject to many. Its unobtrusiveness is usually a part of its script, but it also reveals how the 'material culture of everyday life' of the museum world has been undervalued by historians and researchers. My dissertation aims to bring the history of museum seating to the fore by placing it within broader narratives of museum history and museum studies, finding it a 'seat' between the history of display and the history of viewing and experiencing.

Using the V&A's Raphael Galleries, my dissertation seeks to know what museum seating can tell us about the way the V&A has been 'framing' the Raphael Cartoons, and, ultimately, what does that reveal about how the museum has been positioning itself in different times. The methodology guiding this project draws upon Madeleine Akrich's thesis on script analysis. Script analysis makes objects talk, revealing their inner 'manual of instructions'. Indeed, museum seats have embedded messages that condition the way visitors experience museums. In my project, the message inscribed by museums and the message that the seats effectively irradiate are more important than the script devised by furniture designers. Museums shape meaning, sometimes partially unconsciously, by interrelating architecture, space, objects, furniture and visitors. By using specific seats in specific locations, museums act like authors of a broader semantic and geographical script. Methodologically,

Joana Albernaz Delgado



John Chillingworth, *The Art Of Love*, 1954, London, A Modern Pilgrim's Progress, Picture Post no. 7114, 1954 (via Getty Images).

my work 'de-scribes' (using Akrich's terminology) museum seats in the Raphael Galleries, unpacking their script in context, to unveil the way the V&A has been framing the Cartoons. The 'de-description' flows within a pictorial journey in time between 1865 and 2021 that reveals the evolution of museum seats in dialogue with space, objects and subjects in the Raphael Galleries.

Considering the lack of consistent primary sources about exhibition design decision processes and about visitors' experience within such a long period of time, script analysis allows the extraction of primary information from the most stable sources available: material culture, covering visual evidence and, whenever possible, the museum seats themselves.

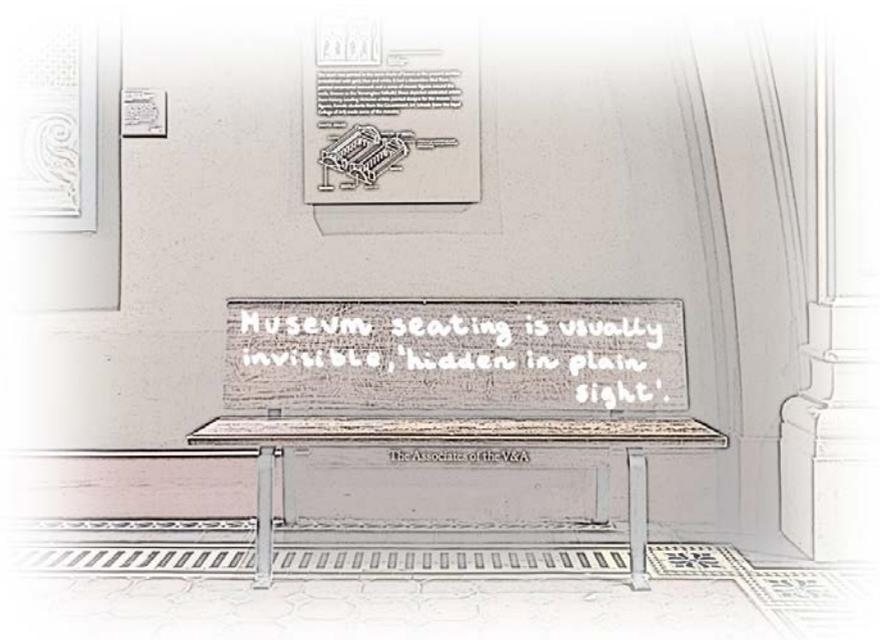
My investigation concludes that the Raphael Cartoons have been presented by the V&A in a dual, albeit non-equal, form, which has fluctuated in time between displaying them as art or design objects. The pendular movement that embodies the presentation of the Cartoons is in itself an image of the way the V&A has been shaping its identity as an art and design museum, revealing how both the Cartoons and the museum have been symbiotically evolving over time.

# Talking seats

A visual celebration of museum benches

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Shannon Finnegan has been designing museum benches for different art spaces since 2018. The series, called 'Do you want us here or not', is a poignant response to the lack of seating in museums, a form of seated protest that they shape with words written in all caps on the benches themselves. 'I'D RATHER BE SITTING. SIT IF YOU AGREE.', or 'IT WAS HARD TO GET HERE. REST HERE IF YOU AGREE.' are two examples of how they use museum benches as art, focusing on the frequently invisible disabled audience.



Although my research does not focus on accessibility or museum fatigue, I borrowed inspiration from Finnegan's benches to celebrate my own work on the history of museum seating.

Joana Albermaz Delgado

Using photographs taken at the V&A, these visual snippets embody some of my conclusions about the power of museum seats and their historical importance.



Museum seats convey a specific script on how visitors should experience museums, and therefore they also reveal how museums see their own collections and themselves. Here, they are a graphic expression of my thoughts, an encounter between content and shape, substance and form.





Museum seats irradiate, but they also absorb. They are often covered with scribbles, doodles and scratches, layers of deliberate damage carved through the decades.

These visual musings also pay tribute to the rich, albeit hard life of museum seating.



They do not intend to praise vandalism and mischief. By inscribing my conclusions on these benches, I intend to acknowledge museum seats as repositories of memories and material instruments of a primary human need to be remembered, to leave a mark, to make an indent.



They are also, in their own way, wonderful witnesses of the relationship between humans and their past.

Images used by courtesy of Victoria and Albert Museum, London. All the photographs were taken by the Author at the V&A in 2021 and digitally modified by the author. The Author is the sole responsible for these changes and for the content of this work.

## 'SAVING BATH'

### The Building Conservation Movement in Bath, c. 1963-75

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From the early 1960s until the mid-1970s, Bath's built environment was a fiercely contested space.

Architecturally, the city is almost unique – built largely within the space of a hundred years and to the same architectural canon. Sheltered by rolling hills and the river Avon, outward expansion is naturally limited. As a result, any changes that are made to the city's buildings are highly visible and subject to intense scrutiny.

Targeted by the Luftwaffe during the Second World War for its cultural significance and confronted by housing shortages and spiralling maintenance costs post-war, like many cities during the period, Bath faced tough choices.

On one side, building developers and local planning authorities sought to redesign the city through a modernist lens. In opposition stood residents' associations, like the Bath Preservation Trust (BPT) established in 1934.

Historiographically, the growth of the building conservation movement is a crowded field. Successive generations of historians from the 1980s onwards have written compelling histories of the development of planning legislation. Few have addressed the role of community groups as agents of this design change, however, and the BPT is a particularly prominent example.

Coinciding with the emergence of a new environmental movement and the introduction of stringent planning and conservation legislation, using original archival material, this case study encapsulates the professionalisation of the heritage industry and popular perceptions of the built environment more broadly.

Through a close analysis of the BPT's archival material, I develop an ontology of preservation – identifying the specific building features that the group sought to conserve. This process also reveals a surprising concern for the natural as well as the built environment. The French term 'terroir', which loosely translates to the intangible character imparted on a crop as a result of its place of origin, best describes this philosophy.



Northampton Street, Bath (undated). Bath Preservation Trust, 2/15/294/1-26.

Fundamentally, it is an ideology of contradiction: conservative, yet non-party political and sceptical of commercial interests; radical, yet fiercely pragmatic.

In the third chapter of this work, I pin down the practical means through which this vision of preservation was implemented. In less than ten years, how did this group grow to amass a significant property portfolio, command national media attention, and wield significant political influence?

The answer rests on the phenomenal commitment of its lay members who meticulously detailed their surroundings through the mixed mediums of photographs, sketches, lists, poetry, and scale models of the city. Members of the Trust used these resources first to infiltrate and then supersede local planning authorities.

Looking beyond Bath, thanks to their wealthy benefactors, the Trust built a substantial property portfolio. With this newfound wealth, the BPT ruthlessly pursued the attention of the media and exploited celebrity endorsements. As a result, Bath was ultimately 'saved' by the Trust, who went on to exercise serious political clout.

We are living through a period in which our built environment is undergoing intense scrutiny, whether for its historical progeny or environmental impact. The implications of this study, therefore, are increasingly relevant to understanding today's challenges.



Abbey Green, Bath (5 June 1971). Bath Record Office: Chron X  
Neg M3019.

Photograph of Mardi Gras celebrations in Abbey Green, Bath. Note the sign attached to the building in the background which informed the public that 2 and 2a Abbey Green had been purchased by the Bath Preservation Trust for restoration. This was the first of many properties to be bought, restored, and sold by the Trust.

Capturing the spirit of the age which foregrounded dynamic motion and rapid change, quick-change acts were a sensation on the turn of the nineteenth century British music-hall stage. This was due, to some extent, to the success of Leopoldo Fregoli's quick-change show at the Alhambra Theatre in London in 1897. His performances, which comprised fast, seemingly impossible, metamorphoses from one character to the next, were widely influential, inspiring other performers to emulate his artistry. These solo routines of multiple rapid costume changes linked by narrative, music, or song, combined aspects of acting, comedy, illusion, magic and mimicry; they exemplified the synergies that underpinned much music-hall and variety performance. Highly entertaining, and at times, astonishing, the quick-change artist became a popular act and was extensively performed during the first three decades of the twentieth century.

Yet the act's popularity declined, with performances largely slipping from view in the 1930s. In this dissertation, I explore that absence. However, I look not just at those disappeared performers, but also at the bodies hidden behind those seen by the audience; the absence, and omission from the theatre histories of the theatre workers, expert costume technicians, with whom, utilising now obsolete costume technologies, the performer collaboratively created the performances seen onstage.

I examine the genre of quick-change in British popular performance between 1897-1927, through the work of three solo quick-change artists; the aforementioned Fregoli, alongside R.A. Roberts and Mr Hymack. This dissertation's overall aim is to reframe their performances as collaborative works, created by a performance team. It demonstrates that these acts utilised specialised costumes whose quick-change functionality was enabled by bespoke, non-standardised fastening technologies; it also explores the commonalities of knowledge regarding construction trade secrets that were shared between acts.

Differing from the small body of existing scholarship regarding



Leopoldo Fregoli (in skirt), mid quick-change act, while a costume technician finishes the costume change. Screen shot from *Segreto per Vestirsi (Con Aiuto)* Source: Leopoldo Fregoli, *Segreto per Vestirsi (Con Aiuto)* [1897-1899], Vimeo <<https://vimeo.com/177236768/cdd78c1f6c>> [accessed 27 March 2022].

quick-change, this dissertation uses the material culture of the performance, costumes, production documents and visual representations, to explore the genre's artistry, operative methods and labour structures. As a performance centring on rapid changes of costume, quick-change teams required technicians with expert garment construction knowledge and needle skills. Thus, due to the gendered education of the era, the presence of women workers was fundamental within these teams. Two of the acts researched were operated as family businesses. This dissertation explores how, although this could be of benefit to the family, this replicated, within the theatrical environment, the patriarchal structure of wider society. For the study of quick-change performance, significant material is located within the non-academic literature of the twentieth-century popular press; thus, the dissertation uses theoretical frameworks that engage with anecdotal histories. It further establishes, through an intertheatrical reading, influences surrounding the genre's materiality, operation and performance.

## CONSTRUCTIONS OF RACE AND IDENTITY

### Fashion in Photography from the Malay Peninsula, 1890-1940

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Li-Xuan Teo

This dissertation explores the nature of photographs as designed objects in the context of colonial Malaya, from the late 19th to early 20th centuries. It focuses specifically on the use of clothing, adornment, and presentations of the body as part of the construction of an image, investigating how colonial ideologies, as well as local concerns about race and identity, were communicated through the fashioned body and the photographic medium. The text is split into two parts: the first explores commercial photography in the form of souvenir postcards, images in publications, and anthropological photos; the second examines more personal photographs, mainly studio portraits of individuals, couples, friends, and family.

Each of these images provides a unique perspective on the relationship between colonial media, material culture, and the transmission of ideas. By analysing them in combination with other literary, visual, and material sources, this dissertation interrogates the various narratives they present, raising questions about the social hierarchies, power dynamics, and agency that affect how a photograph is created and consumed. It argues that the pressures of colonial rule, along with the rising socio-political ideologies of the early 20th century, affected portrayals of race, identity, and community across different forms of photographic media, as some sought to reinforce the ruling imperialist ideology while others attempted to create new or re-imagined identities that would allow them to navigate the changing landscape.



Early 20th-century postcards of people from British Malaya.  
Photography by Li-Xuan Teo.

Fashion and adornment are an integral part of how identities are portrayed in portrait photography. Along with the use of props, backdrops, and the pose or positioning of the subject's body, fashion forms a major part of how the image of a photograph is designed, and used to shape a narrative. This narrative might vary wildly depending on the intended use of the image and the people involved in its creation – whether that is the subject, photographer, publisher, or developer.

My dissertation, *Constructions of Race and Identity: Fashion in Photography from the Malay Peninsula, 1890-1940*, was an exploration of the identities and narratives presented through different photographs of late 19th and early 20th century British Malaya. Focusing specifically on the use of clothing, adornments, and presentations of the body, it investigated the connections between fashion, bodies, and racial ideologies in this region, as well as the socio-political circumstances that lead to their formation. Through the analysis of photographic sources ranging from postcards and souvenir album to personal portraits and family photos, it called into question the narratives and intentions behind each image in order to shed light on the issues of agency, autonomy, and personhood inherent to the unequal power dynamics of colonial society.

The research I conducted for this piece was eye-opening in a number of ways. In addition to opening up new areas of academic interest – namely, the history of portraiture and presentations of the human body within it – it also encouraged me to confront my own relationship with fashion, my body, and the camera. Why do I choose to dress or present myself the way that I do, and how does that change when I'm in front of a camera lens? How have my experiences growing up as a minority, both in the UK and my home country of Malaysia, affected the way that I use and view clothing and photography? What do the photographs I choose to display or keep say about me, or the people within them?

In a world where fashion moves so quickly, cameras have become ubiquitous, and photographs can be shared in seconds, these questions feel more pertinent to me than ever before – especially considering

the colonial power dynamics of race, geography, and class that have extended from the past to the present day. These dynamics still shape the way images are created, distributed, and consumed, whether it is an advertisement for a fashion house or an intimate engagement portrait. One particularly famous example of this is the controversy surrounding the portrait of the “Afghan Girl” in National Geographic magazine, which placed a spotlight on issues of agency, consent, and the power imbalance between photographer and subject in the context of international journalism. Sharbat Gula, the subject of the photograph, was a minor when her portrait was turned into an emblem of ongoing conflicts in the Middle East, although she and her family received little compensation relative to the popularity and widespread distribution of the image.

I am not an internationally recognised figure or world-famous photographer. However, like many of my peers, I still take photographs of myself, my friends, and my family with some regularity. I have shared these images on social media, used them in official documents, shown them to others and displayed them in my home. Looking at these photographs now, the question of how clothing, environment, and bodies connect to the narratives about culture, identity, and relationships depicted in them always comes to my mind. Perhaps sometime in the future, a researcher will see these photographs and analyse them in a manner similar to how I analysed the photographs used for my dissertation research. I cannot help but wonder about what knowledge they might gain from this, and how their insights might compare to mine.

# Q&A WITH OUR COHORT:

Homogenise

---

Tentacular - relating to or resembling tentacles.

---

Zoom meeting?

---

Go-to word: cohort

---

Material culture

---

Favourite word: muff  
least favourite: Bourdieu

---

'Are we all still in the waiting room ?'

Pleasure & leisure  
Favourite word –  
Judgement.

---

Intertheatricality -  
favourite

---

Teleological - use it  
constantly and hate  
myself for it.

---

Sustainability

---

Deformed desires

---

Favourite word:  
Delftware

# WHAT BECAME YOUR GO TO OR FAVOURITE WORD DURING THE MA EXPERIENCE OR ONE THAT YOU CAN NO LONGER STAND?

Embodiment embodies an idea of materiality that is fully embodied in my line of thought at this stage - and at the same time it embodies all the lazy, go-to concepts that I can no longer stand (see what I mean).

---

Country house

---

Material Culture

---

Historiography - I couldn't pronounce it for quite a while which caused some issues

Favourite word:  
Reflexivity

## WHO MAKES A MAP?

### Map design(ers) in the Philippines during the Malaspina Expedition (1792-93)

In the second half of the eighteenth century, European voyages of exploration sailed across the Pacific Ocean, using increasingly technologically precise instruments and methods in the production of hydrographic and cartographic information. This information, in turn, returned to Europe and was translated into an extensive production of published maps, contributing to a growing sense of “planetary consciousness” in the European imperial subject.

While most of the bibliography on this tends to focus on British and French efforts, the Spanish had been present in the Pacific for centuries before, a presence centred around the Acapulco-Manila Galleon trade. Increasingly under pressure by British and French incursions into their supposed “Spanish Lake”, Madrid opted initially to focus on earlier explorations of the Pacific; however, they quickly began using increasingly precise methods in an attempt to keep up with their European counterparts. The Malaspina Expedition was the height of Spanish use of Precision, a five-year voyage throughout the Pacific coastlines under Spanish control.

My dissertation focuses on the hydrographic and cartographic production done in relation to a specific section of the Expedition, a nine-month period spent in the Philippines, between March and December 1792. Focusing on one of the most important border zones of Spanish colonial presence in the Pacific, the dissertation aims to look at how precision and printing intentions influenced map design in relation to the information acquired in the Filipino Archipelago, and how these two concepts interact with one another. Findings suggest that, at this time, precision is highly selective, and that printing intentions lead to a simplification of precise information – all in the name of colonial control in the Pacific.



Mapa de la Isla de Luzón e Islas adyacentes, c.1792-93  
Expedición Malaspina  
Archivo Museo Naval de Madrid, MN-61-7



1. Pick what you want to design! I decided to go with the two main areas in my dissertation, the Bay of Sorsogon in Luzon and the Guimaras Channel in the Visayas, both in the Philippines;
2. Try to remember it from all the maps you had to look at during your dissertation! If that doesn't work, try the Internet;
3. Pick your canvas! I decided to go with these Air Mail envelopes because I like the look of them, and also because it's some of the clear paper I have in my house right now.

4. Be upset at the first result! Wow, you really messed up that writing huh (see Figure 1). Also, London doesn't really fit in here. Bin it;
5. Do a nicer, neater version! There was only a little issue with erasing my attempts at writing it before with a pencil, but besides that, it's looking nice (see Figure 2)! I like it;
6. Start questioning everything: why should the neater version be the nicer one? Why is it that I chose to draw these areas? What does it mean to have immediate access to satellite and aerial images of areas across the world, but in such an impersonalized way as to be from a perspective most people have never seen a place from?
7. Realize making a map is not easy or simple. Realize maps don't fall from trees, and that every representation of space stems from a conscious, subjective choice. Maps are designed objects and as such are subject to their makers' choices, intentions, and preconceptions. Hope you enjoyed!



## THE NEW SILK FARMS

### The Rebirth of Italian Sericulture in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

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Margot Drayson

Over the past two decades, sericulture — the rearing of and caring for the silkworm *Bombyx mori* for the production of raw silk — has re-emerged in Italy through the establishment of several silk farms and mulberry cultivation sites in the provinces of Padua and Catanzaro. In Padua, several farms were created in the early 2000s as part of the sericulture research group Serinnovation, which includes the leading organic wine enterprise Fattoria Il Brolo. In Catanzaro, the silk farm Nido di Seta was founded around 2014 partly through the support of the San Floro municipality to revive the southern Italian silk road.

My dissertation investigates why silk farming has reappeared in Italy, considering the activity largely disappeared during the second half of the twentieth century. Importantly, it explores how sericulture is being re-introduced along with sustainable development goals. By mapping out and exploring the silk farms and silk farming research hubs that have developed, the dissertation highlights and examines sericulture's sustainable aspects and, consequently, its environmental, social, and economic implications. Another question the dissertation addresses is how the rebirth of sericulture and twenty-first century silk farms contribute to Italy's silk legacy and cultural identity.

Silk farms Fattoria Il Brolo and Nido di Seta are guiding study cases throughout the research. For primary sources, the dissertation looks at their silkworm rearing and mulberry tree cultivation processes, as well as their equipment, policies, and the actors involved, from the sericulturists to the silkworms. In addition to the silk farms, the dissertation considers the products and companies in bio-medicine, fashion, and architecture in need of traceable and high-quality silk and silk cocoons and the social and political entities that support and promote the silk farms as primary sources.

Due to the nature of the topic, which is part of an ongoing phenomenon, an important portion of the research consisted of interviews with and on-site visits to the silk farms Fattoria Il Brolo and Nido di Seta and the research centre Serinnovation in Padua. Alternatively, research was



Silk Pavilion II, by Neri Oxman, exhibited at the MoMA in *Neri Oxman: Material Ecology*. Photograph by Margot Drayson, October 2020.

based on the primary sources' websites and correspondence with leading sericulturists and silk-based product experts.

Overall, the dissertation argues that it is sericulture's multi-disciplinary, cross-disciplinary and generally collaborative nature that permits silk farms and enterprises to facilitate local and regional social inclusion, economic opportunity, and ecological health. The research demonstrates an ongoing dialogue between traditional processes, artisanship and local know-hows, and technological and social innovation and experimentation. While the dissertation highlights areas in which this rebirth of silk farming is environmentally, socially and economically sustainable, it recognizes that each is only a fragment or story of the larger Italian silk farming landscape and its dynamics. Due to its multidisciplinary and cross-disciplinary nature, sericulture entangles a multitude of beings, cultures, and spaces at various levels, making its sustainable impact generally challenging to evaluate.



Nido di Seta lies in the heart of a San Floro valley.



Where the rearing of the silkworms takes place.



The farm cultivates both black mulberry and white mulberry types; the black mulberry fruits are used to produce local jams whilst the white mulberry provides the preferred leaves to feed the silkworms.



Indoor space of the silk museum in San Floro, featuring some delicate brick work!



Above:  
As they get ready to spin their cocoons, the silkworms are placed on mulberry tree branches and plastic mountages. The more regular the structure, the healthier and stronger the cocoon.



Left:  
A mulberry fruit – for scale.



A silkworm having dinner.



A mulberry leaf — for scale.



Raw silk.



Fattoria Il Brolo is located in Abano Terme, near Padua, at the foot of the Euganean Hills.



However, the farm is first and foremost a producer of organic wine and the team manages a few acres of grape vines.



The mulberry grove lies in the back of the farm; mulberry leaves are the silkworm's main source of nutrition.





Leaf shredder or 'leaf tagliatelle': the leaves are passed into the shredder so they are small enough for the young silkworms to eat.



At a certain stage, the silkworms are raised and fed on branches and plastic mountages. These structures allow stronger support for the silkworms to grow and eventually spin their cocoons.



## THE NINETEENTH CENTURY FUR TRADE IN ENGLAND: Fashion, the Exotic and Wild Cats

Megan Graham

The nineteenth century saw Britain develop rapidly due to technological, scientific and industrial innovations. This onset of expeditious transformation led to the expanding wealth of the middle classes who along with the upper classes invested in lucrative industries and trades helping to expand British power and domination within the British colonies. These revelations resulted in heightened opportunities for travel and increased interest in imperial cultures and commodities, particularly within India. This dissertation focuses on the fashion of wearing leopard and tiger skins in Victorian England. The aim of the research is to find out how these skins were obtained, by tracing the hunting and trading networks that operated within the British empire in the nineteenth century. Reflecting on the importation of exotic skins from India to the docklands of London. Questioning who wore these skins and why.

The fashion for wearing exotic animal skins during the nineteenth century has received less attention from fashion and design historians, than perhaps other more popularised furs such as beaver and arctic fox. This may have been due to the shortage of securable primary sources and the network of knowledge surrounding leopard and tiger skins focusing on big game and trophy hunting as opposed to their use within fashion. The methodologies used throughout this research are vast and far yielding as the trade of exotic skins is not transparent as these colonial commodities are intertwined with imperialistic trade, politics and race and class agendas, along with embodied characteristics of the grotesque and monstrous.

The novelty of wearing exotic animal skins is analysed in four sections in this dissertation. Firstly, it proceeds by observing the tiger as a case study, to assimilate knowledge of the characteristics of the living creature, to understand why these skins became desirable to the imperialist hunter and female consumer. Questioning the relationships between the native and imperialist hunters to distinguish hierarchies and the transfer of accumulated knowledge. It then moves on to trace the operations that took place through the transportation of skins, utilising reports from female colonial travellers. The final stage of this dissertation accounts for the desire for wearing exotic animal skins and how this



Vogue, *Fashion: The Models for Dinner Costumes*, 1896.

may have helped arouse a feeling of female liberation and empowerment. Thus, it challenges the perceptions of the female colonial consumer in Britain in the nineteenth century.

The notion of otherness and the exotic are emphasised throughout this dissertation since it was these embedded traits that rendered these skins unique and desirable compared to other popular skins in fashion during the nineteenth century.

# Q&A WITH OUR COHORT:

Dub, Chronixx and Bach.

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Komachi (album) by Meitei

---

Many! But my favourite was 'just like magic' by Ariana Grande

---

Slave To The Rhythm - Grace Jones

---

Brutal by Olivia Rodrigo (the whole of Sour by Olivia Rodrigo to be honest)

---

Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto in E minor, Op.64 by Viktoria Mullova

---

Sweet thing – van Morrison and if I was really in a hole do you think I'm sexy rod Stewart

---

I can't write with music playing as it distracts me, but the during the pandemic, the mosque at the end of my street in East London sang their Friday prayers through a pa system to facilitate socially distanced worship; hearing it marked the passing of each week for me, particularly during the lockdown periods.

---

I rarely listen to music heh

---

## WHAT SONG OR SONGS DID YOU LISTEN WHILE WRITING OR WORKING THAT KEPT YOU MOTIVATED DURING THE MA?

Space is only noise if you can see- Nicolas Jaar; Blue Monday- New Order; I used to dance with my daddy - Datarock; Midnight Love-Girl in Red; Lucky love- Micheal Seyer; じれったい-玉置浩二; High Hopes-Pink Floyd; Lost for Words- Pink Floyd

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The 'classic house music 80's & 90's' playlist on Spotify should probably be part of my dissertation acknowledgements at this point (shout out to u/ djohnblaze40, wherever you are).

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Home - Hania Rani Qawwali

---

I'm 55 at heart so I like listening to the radio - bbc radio 6 music is my station of choice

---

None, I can't work with music sadly.

---

Lindstrom & Prins Thomas

---

Breathe - Rhodes

---

The loud sound of my children playing (or fighting with each other, or complaining about my work) kept me motivated to finish the writing as soon as possible.

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Dancing Queen

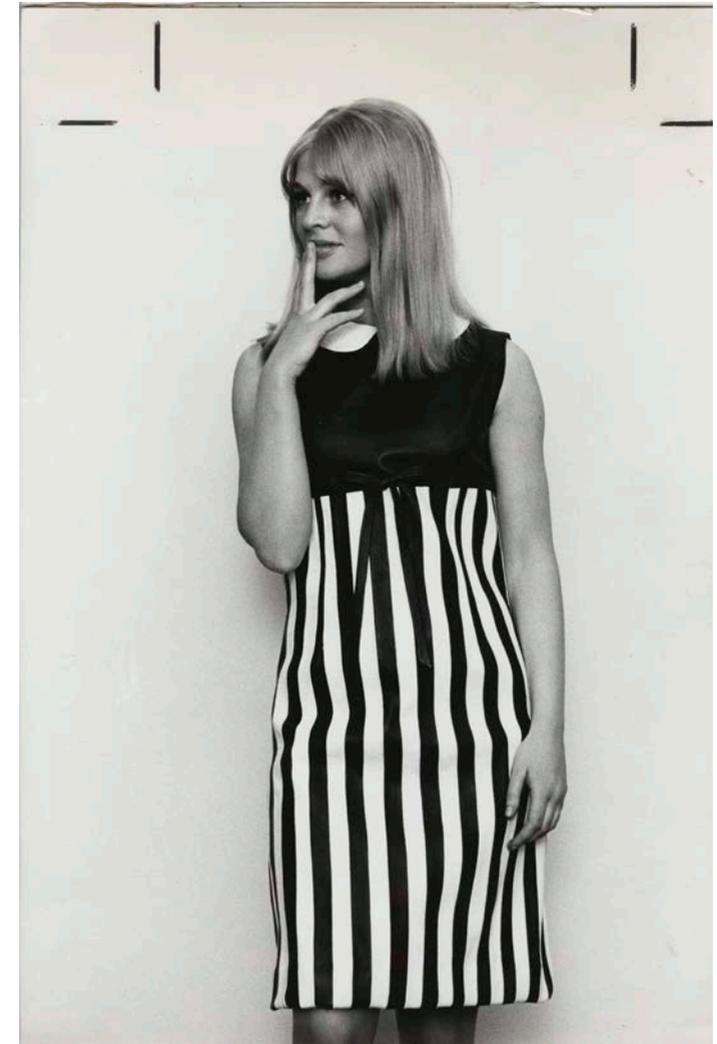
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## COSTUME DESIGN FOR CONTEMPORARY NARRATIVES: The Intersection of Fashion and Film in 1960s London

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Phoebe Evans

Research focusing on costume design typically seeks to remove itself from associating with fashion, making clear the distinction between the two separate fields as a question of intention: character or consumer. Whilst there are undoubtedly differences between the two design fields, often this desire to separate has neglected the similarities between the two practices, or in fact where they may overlap. This dissertation seeks to address those similarities, focussing on when costume and fashion have intersected within film. Situating this research in the context of 1960s London, it addresses two films, *Darling* (1965) and *Kaleidoscope* (1966), both of which explore narratives based on contemporary society. As a decade of great social and cultural change, the sixties present an interesting period of history to research. With fashion and popular culture at its core, depictions of this on screen showcase a version of reality through the guise of character and narrative. Analysis of costumes created to replicate contemporary design and offer authenticity to this image presents a unique opportunity to spotlight intricacies in the process of designing for contemporary narratives. Visual analysis of the films and their costume choices is supported by textual sources such as newspapers, magazines and film journals, offering insight into contemporary perspectives. This is reinforced by oral history interviews with practitioners as well as audience responses collected as part of the UCL led project that focuses on British film in the 1960s.



Julie Christie wearing a striped leather dress by Mitzou, photographed by Iran Hatami, *The Sunday Times*, 30 May 1965. Ernestine Carter Archive, Fashion Museum Bath.

## History of Design – Evolving Research Through Interdisciplinary Methods

Phoebe Evans

At the beginning of the MA programme, my primary area of design interest was architecture. This topic formed the foundation of my initial research project which focused on the development of terraced housing across London during the Victorian era. Attempting to dissect the different factors which cumulatively shaped building patterns during the period, my research looked to evaluate varying assessments of causation by historians who cited economic, social and aesthetic factors as the primary drivers of change. Using the V&A collections as a starting point and taking a more object-centred approach to research, my next project centred on historical dress and fashion history, focussing on a stomacher made in the mid 18th century woven in silver lace. Through researching contemporary trade guides, Old Bailey records and Wills held at the National Archives I was able to find evidence of silver lace production within England despite the craft traditionally being associated with continental Europe. Further investigation into the object's acquisition by the V&A provided insight into its rich family history, as well as its repurposing in later years as part of a wedding day ensemble and as fancy dress.

Building on my interest in fashion and design, the focus of my dissertation has been the intersection of fashion and costume design in film. In choosing this topic, I have sought to consider film as a designed object, recognising contributions and collaborations by multiple designers to craft its overall audio and visual impact. The interdisciplinary nature of design history was crucial for the realisation of this project, allowing me to incorporate different elements of primary evidence such as magazines, newspapers, journals, oral history interviews and design sketches against a theoretical framework that drew upon disciplines such as fashion, costume and art history as well as film and fashion theory.



Julia Harris, costume sketch for *Darling* (PD-14767), BFI collections, London.

## DEATH OF THE SOVIET DREAM

### The Evolution of Troparevo-Nikulino from the 1980s to the 1990s

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Polina Davydova

My MA dissertation is a micro-historical exploration of transformations in the lived environment of a Soviet district, Troparevo-Nikulino in Moscow. The study is placed within two decades from the 1980s to the 1990s, when Soviet Russia was coming out of Zastoi and into Perestroika, and subsequently moved into the 'wild 1990s'.

Oral history is adopted as a primary method for historical investigation, and recollections from four district's residents are the main source of primary evidence for this study. The interviews used in this project are unique and were specifically crafted for the purposes of this dissertation. They facilitate a greater understanding of the district as a whole and explore specific design changes deemed characteristic of the period in question. The thesis will aim to understand the main reasoning behind the alterations people performed to the front doors and balconies through these conversations. In particular, it will focus on the Soviet sheathed faux-leather doors, the metal doors of the 1990s, and the now pervasive glazed balconies.

Alongside exploring why people altered their homes in these ways, it will attempt to place these common modifications into the broader historical context, trying to understand whether these design changes were a continuation of existing traditions or if the transformations were caused by the shifts in the more extensive political landscape.

This research project is only a small stepping stone into the understanding of the transformations in the lived environment of the Soviet Union, and I am looking forward to exploring these subjects further. The approach and methodology of this dissertation can be utilised to investigate the lived environments across a myriad of other districts across different countries which inherited similar Soviet housing stock.



V. Vodovozov, 'Illustrations for "Moscow Olympic Village" Article from *Arhitektura SSSR* 1980, Issue 1', 1980, Moscow, Soviet Union, Photograph on p. 8, Scanned by Author. p. 52.

## NEW PERSPECTIVES ON DESIGN IDENTITY

### Caribbean Women and the Design of the London Home

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Sarah Mursal

While investigating black British design there appear to be hidden narratives of women.

This started as an interest in Althea McNish and the homogenization of Black culture in British history. Design histories are hidden but emerging about the Black culture within British History and remain to be studied. With a post-colonial lens that focuses on the impact of the empire and suggests a different history, I am interested in exploring the evidence proving that migrant culture's contribution to British design is present but hidden. From styles to design choices, these were not just migrants bringing their own cultures but assimilating to British tastes and reinventing new ideas and aesthetics through material culture.

This study uses Oral histories and photographic evidence of five women from the Caribbean London community to understand the missing voices from history and design aesthetics.

The point of view of women challenges different narratives and perspectives. Women worked in the city, had families, and owned their properties. Some homes in suburban London, are decorated with pristine wallpaper and quality furniture.

These islanders had different styles and cultural signifiers. However, there is a limited representation of the individual islands and the subjects are often associated with vibrant colours and the 'tropicalisation' of Caribbean culture. This investigation proves otherwise and highlights the necessary study of migrant culture, the impact of consumerism and a local economy, and the interwoven culture in British design.



Altie & Juris, from daughter Dawn  
Photograph © Dawn Alexander-Joseph, 2022.



Maureen at home 1972



Altie in Front room c.1968

To start this process it meant gaining the trust of the women and community I was interested in investigating in order to record oral histories and gather photographic evidence. Five women from the London Caribbean community were contacted in my own community through a school network. They were first-generation/second-generation Caribbean migrants that arrived in the UK around the early 1960s.

I conducted historical research by examining both primary and secondary source material, including selecting and critically evaluating the photographic evidence and conducting oral history interviews, as well as object analysis. I used the photographs as primary evidence of the narrative of design of the home, confirming who made decisions about how to decorate and furnish the homes, and how these decisions were made. The oral histories that were conducted indicated that most of the women in the five case studies I looked at were the main decision-makers in relation to the domestic interiors. This involved choices of soft furnishings, wallpaper and furniture, and in one instance also suggested the redesign of the space. These photographs are from personal collections provided by the daughters and women in the photographs.



Maureen at home 1972

## The 1600 Pomander [Extract from Unit 2 essay]

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The pomander from the Rosalinde and Arthur Gilbert Collection at the V&A is an exquisite artefact that reveals and gives insights into the craftsmanship, the sociological, technological, political and cultural contexts of its period and showing influences of the East. This essay has attempted to introduce the idea that scent and its myriad of unique fragrances and aromas has strong and lasting significance in history. This was achieved by researching the medical, symbolic and societal aspects of the period in England and Europe and researching archives of goldsmiths, apothecaries and medical recipes from trusts, charities and guilds together with accounts and records from the 1600s. In a time when a pandemic has limited our resources, it is evident that we have to find more direct methods to find the answers we seek.

In the case of our Pomander, it signifies something, not only of great and treasured beauty but, under its closed wings, it entices us to want to know more of its unique and mysterious story.

From an autoethnographic perspective, this essay explores the role of women, from the working herbalists and those in a position of wealth and privilege. Perhaps upon further investigation, we will find female goldsmiths working in the 1600s.

What has become clear is that smells can transcend religion, creed, and class.

Therefore this artifact could equally be displayed and used in examples of history as modern-day decolonising stories of evolving design through the ages.



*Pomander*, ca. 1600-1610 (made), England.  
The Rosalinde and Arthur Gilbert  
Collection on loan to the Victoria and  
Albert Museum, London. © Victoria and  
Albert Museum, London 2022.

This dissertation explores the design of advertisements for imported cameras in China between 1912-1949, the period of Republican China. As shall be argued, advertising design during this period reached a peak. These advertisements, specifically those for cameras and photography are not only iconic artefacts but also a mediation that connects consumers with imported cameras.

The discussion is broken down into three chapters. The first part of this dissertation considers the history of imported cameras between 1912-1949. Through analysis of advertisements and archives of this period, this chapter explores the history of foreign cameras imported to China.

My second chapter is based on the case study of Republican China's magazines and explores the role of mediation and its audience. This discussion explores how advertising design became a mediation that combined imported cameras and amateur photography. The way in which imported cameras have been written about, illustrated, displayed and advertised will be discussed.

The last chapter addresses amateur photography in China. It is argued that the emergence of amateur photography between 1912-1949 was because of imported cameras and mediation. In other words, mediation and attractive prices resulted in the rise of amateur photography in Republican China. In this chapter, the audience of these advertisements and the identity of amateur photographers will be discussed. Additionally, imported cameras are designed and transmitted through mediation, which is a process of redesigning originally designed products. Therefore, the question of whether it changed the history of photography in China will be explored.

This research aims to assess not only the historical and cultural circumstances in which mediation created the environment of amateur photography but to also further understand the significance of creating photographs during that period. This dissertation investigates to what extent mediation in Republican China was significant in terms of identity, maintenance and navigation for amateur photography.



Taken by Cheng-Fulin, November 5 p.m.  
F8 1/25 with yellow filter, Kodak F4, Delta  
express film. Sources: Liang-You Magazine.



Taken by Luo Bonian , "Composition" ,  
silver salt paper base, 6.2x8.2cm, 1930s .  
Sources: Liang-You Magazine.



Taken by Luo Bo-nian, Ping-Cao =  
Duckweed, silver salt paper base, 19x39cm,  
1930s. Sources: Liang-You Magazine.

During the period of the Republic of China, the importation of cameras was the result of the global industrial expansion and global trade framework, which was also restricted by material and social conditions. But production sales have three necessary premises: products, market and consumers. While these three aspects of discussion are not the main goal of this article, it turns out that products, customers and the market are directly or indirectly connected by mediation: the mediation in the Republic of China's importation and consumption of the camera, in advertising and magazine design. This paper is not a direct discussion of advertising and magazine content, nor is it an aesthetic analysis of the content therein. It explains the visual design under the background of dumping history or globalization trade through the theory of Western imagology.

### About History of Design

When I think about design history and the import of designed goods, I first think of criticisms of colonialism, but colonialism, cannot fully explain the fact that at first camera equipment was introduced to China by means of dumping which caused a tremendous echo in Chinese society. Imported cameras entered China at the end of the Qing Dynasty, accompanied by dumping from Europe, and became a result of natural selection during the Republic of China 50 years later. An important part is mediation, which undeniably has made contributions to the history of Chinese photography. Therefore, I began to think about the power of image-based expression, trying to provide a new way of thinking about the analysis of advertising design in the Republic of China.

This dissertation was in part an experiment in which history was treated as an activity. The production and circulation of advertising is not only the result of design but also the transmitter of design. To some extent, it supplements the diversity of the development of visual design in China and shakes the professionalism of photography.

Communication is a particularly important concept in design history. In the first chapter, based on the Western colonial background during the Republic of China, I discussed the history of camera

importation by taking the trade records of treaty ports as the case study object. The importation of cameras was accompanied by the colonial expansion of the West. However, as Shu-Mei Shi mentioned, the pursuit of modernism by the intellectuals of the Republic of China can be attributed to 'The lure of the modern', and the dumping of Western capitalism provided a material basis for the development of Chinese commerce and advertising industry.

In the second chapter, I used the concept of visual language analysis to discuss the application of graphics in advertising design. I first described the change of mediation in the Chinese context. From a derogatory term, mediation gradually acquired a reasonable identity, which to some extent changed the traditional and simple buy-sell business model. The functions and positioning of different photography magazines determine the emphasis of advertising designers in the design of language information and image information. It not only realises the interaction between magazine designers and consumers but also realises the interaction between pictorial products and consumers. The use of visual language in advertising may not be intentional by the producer or the AD designer, but when I explain it in terms of 'AD meaning generation structures' and 'Visual Grammar', it makes perfect sense. As a foreign visual design product, advertising has updated the limitations of language expression. The expression of visual language and text language weakens the difficulty of receiving information so that the public with different levels of education can obtain and receive the information in advertisements.

# THE POLITICS OF CRAFT

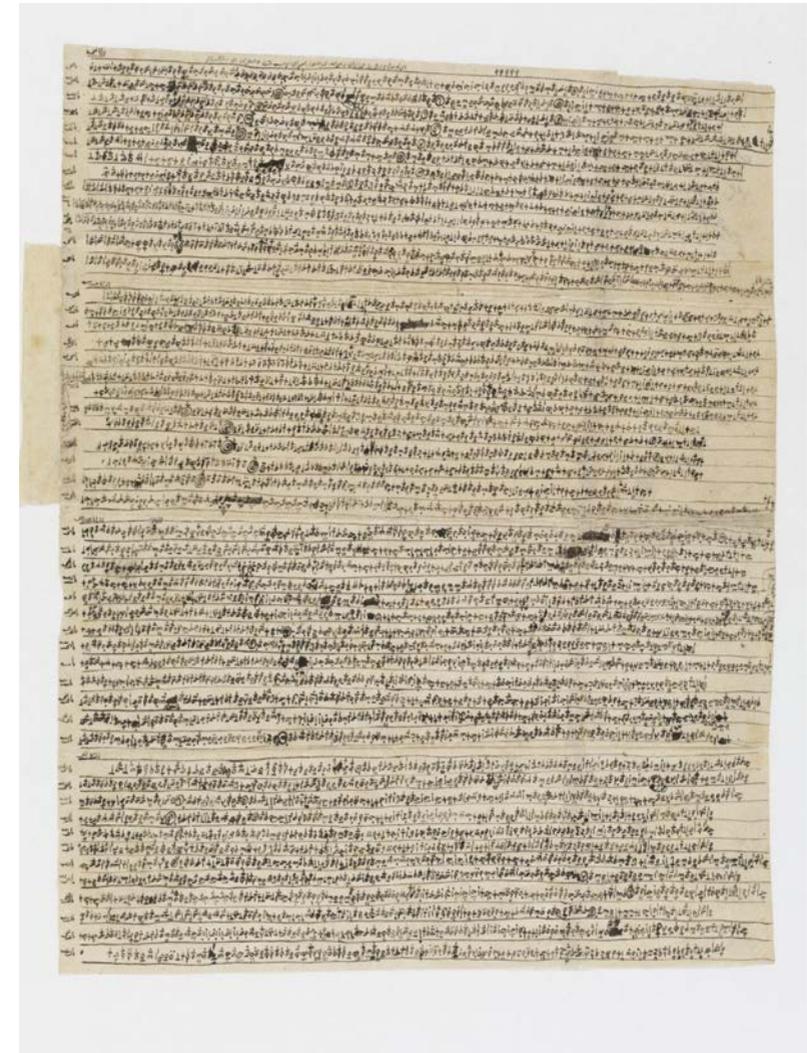
## A Case Study of the Kashmir Shawl 1947-2021

This paper explores the role of politics in the creation and production of the shawl. The shawl becomes a necessity of negotiation within the sphere of memory and cultural heritage. It serves as a symbol of continuation in a long struggle with subordination. Gaps in recording this struggle from the lens of the artisan exist, and a need to explore why instigated this research paper.

The materiality of the shawl changes through its design history and is assessed to mark the significant changes. An interconnected theme of production centring on the artisan as a vehicle of political instigation is lacking in secondary literature, making it necessary to uncover the reasons for this omission. Whilst attempting to assess what their role has been as invisible actors in the shawl's story before and after the Partition of Kashmir.

The effects of new policies after the Partition of Kashmir on the artisans and upon the shawl contribute to the design change enhancing the emblematic significance of the Kashmir shawl. I followed these design changes to unravel the story of artisans who have created a new narrative of hope after the Partition.

The shawl has proven itself to be a vehicle of delivery from oppression for her artisans, yet was not widely signified with this iconic position. The paper emphasizes this aspect whilst recording factors that have served as a map of recovery and revival. It is a story narrating how this craft has overlapped with politics to create a new identity for the people of this region: Kashmir and her best craft remain inextricably entangled.



Unknown Maker, Weaving Code for a Kashmir Shawl, Kashmir. Nineteenth century. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

The Partition of India included a division of Kashmir. The spirit of harmonious existence that was defined by ‘Kashmiriyat’ fell under an eclipse of communal violence and ethnic differences based on religion and race surfaced in Kashmir after five hundred years.<sup>1</sup>

Kashmir signed treaties of neutrality with both India and Pakistan, but soon acceded to India.<sup>1</sup> This led to a war and the eventual partition of Kashmir Valley into India, Pakistan and China was realised into existence.<sup>2</sup>

The neighbouring areas of Tibet became a sovereign region whilst Ladakh and Jammu came under Indian control, leaving portions of Jhelum and Neelam Valley with Pakistan, including the tribal areas of Gilgit and Baltistan. Srinagar, Leh and Muzaffarabad became the new capitals of Kashmir. The division of Kashmir caused several disruptions for the shawl manufacture and trade as free movement was not possible anymore.

Observing both sides of the division fairly, Pascale Schild stating the situation plainly in his paper, believes that neither India nor Pakistan are truly interested to solve the matter.<sup>3</sup> Furthering this angle, Snedden states, ‘Because of the physical and social divisions imposed on them, Kashmiris remain politically unimportant for Pakistan and India and in the Kashmir dispute.’<sup>4</sup>

My research deals with changes in Kashmir focussing on the direct impact upon shawls and discusses the processes that employ traditional methods and their modern enhancements. My focus remains on the sections where design change was most impactful to the fate of the shawl.

Division of a homeland into newly composed ‘other’ territories proves to be a period of sudden upheaval and trauma, raising questions of identity and nationalism. ‘Partition’ is understood in diverse ways, through separation, split, barrier, detach; all words describing the experience of loss.<sup>5</sup> Memory becomes an important vehicle to carry forth the old identity into the new. Heirlooms, language, poetry, dress, art and craft become signifiers of congruence leading to a new specification of identity.

In Kashmir the division was initially smooth, in the case of the artisanal community that experienced this segregation of parts of their



Hand Dye of Wool,  
2018, Srinagar, Kashmir.  
Photograph ©Lark Escobar

lands becoming new territories it is natural that they responded with reworking their aesthetics into fresh narratives of identity formation.

A lack of secondary literature on the effects of the Partition on the weavers and embroiderers of Kashmir leaves the task of piecing together a story of conjecture based on human narratives of memory, and any scriptures that can be located.

The concept of memory and loss discussed by Prateeksha, (originally inspired by Zutshi), in her paper ‘Memorabilia of Kashmiri Tangible Heritage: Counter Narratives of Kashmiri Natives’, echoes how a community stands behind its signifiers of nationalism when confronted with collective displacement, the shawl being one of these emblems. They are compelled to adopt alternate modes of expression through tangible heritage to challenge the dominant representation of their land and community[...]The Migrants used the space of Shaal, or Shawl, to express their discontentment and resentment.<sup>6</sup>

The story of displacement that had started before the Partition in the Dogra period turned into a story of migration. As established in the last chapter of this dissertation, the materiality of the Kashmir shawl was based upon unlimited access to the entire region, not just the Srinagar valley. This made shawl production hostage to the political decisions following 1947.

Shaikh Abdullah, the new leader of the people, single-handedly affected the outcome of Kashmir's fate. Attempting to extort full autonomy for Kashmir, promised to him by Nehru, he opted for accession to India rejecting the peoples' vote to join Pakistan. His negotiation towards autonomy for Kashmir later failed. On 26th October 1947, Kashmir acceded to India. Abdullah became the interim Prime Minister under the aegis of consent of the former Maharaja of Kashmir, Hari Singh, on the 30th.<sup>7</sup>

Immediately after assuming power, he started reforms with the slogan of ushering in the 'New Kashmir' or 'Naya Kashmir', a plan through which Kashmir could become a welfare state.<sup>8</sup> The policies proposed were directly beneficial to the craft industry, in order to recognize their efforts in the development of the formation of a newly 'independent' country. Just before Partition a new impetus was given to the pashmina industry in 1921 by Mahatma Gandhi's Swadeshi Movement but the shawl was replaced by other pashmina products like blankets that did not require skilled craftsmen.<sup>9</sup>

After 1947, the texture of the trade and its dynamics changed, enabling the artisans to own businesses and lands which empowered them and changed the dynamics of manufacturing the Kashmir shawl.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Reeta Chowdhari Tremblay, 'Contested Governance, Competing Nationalisms and Disenchanted Publics', in *Kashmir: History, Politics, Representation*, ed. by Chitrlekha Zutshi (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), p.235.

<sup>2</sup> Priyanka Bakaya, and Sumeet Bhatti, 'Kashmir Conflict: A Study of What Led to the Insurgency in Kashmir Valley & Proposes Future Solutions' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Stanford, 2005).

<sup>3</sup> Pascale Schild, *Peace for Kashmir? Transnational Civilian Peacebuilding across the Line of Control* ([n.p.]: Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich, [n.d]).

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> 'Kashmir Win: Recounting J&K's Accession to India in 1947', *The Economic Times* (2018) <<https://m.economictimes.com/news/defence/kashmir-win-recounting-jks-accession-to-india-in-1947/articleshow/66423603.cms>> [accessed 1 November 2021]

<sup>6</sup> Prateeksha Pathak, 'Memorabilia of Kashmiri Tangible Heritage: Counter Narratives of Kashmiri Natives' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Panjab University, Dialog, 2019).

<sup>7</sup> Christopher Snedden, 'Azad Kashmir: Integral to India, Integrated into Pakistan, Lacking Integrity as an Autonomous Entity', *Kashmir: History, Politics, Representation*, ed. by Chitrlekha Zutshi (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), pp.116,117.

<sup>8</sup> Saloni Gupta, *Contesting Conservation: Shahtoosh Trade and Forest Management in Jammu and Kashmir, India* (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2018).

<sup>9</sup> Parvez Ahmad, 'Shawl Industry and the Institution of Daghsawl in Kashmir (1846-1947)', *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, 66 (2005-2006), 809-817 (p.812).

<sup>10</sup> Saloni Gupta, *Contesting Conservation: Shahtoosh Trade and Forest Management in Jammu and Kashmir, India* (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2018).



Contrasting the Finesse of Handwork in Shawls made in 19th and 20th Century, (From the collection of Naheed Jaffri Azfar), 2021, Karachi. Photograph © Sonya Battla 2022.

# Q&A WITH OUR COHORT:

A bigger perfume object.

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David's fig leaf!  
(REPRO.1857A-161)

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I would have chosen the same object.

---

Probably something in the Cast Courts

---

I would still choose the Chinese export lacquer fan, which I wrote for the Unit 2 essay // Still Julia Neilson's Chinese export lacquer fan

---

Swan muff

Sir Henry Irving's electric wired glove and shoe, worn for his Mephistopheles role in Faust.

---

Have no idea so far... I'm too attached to the Ferragamo Rainbow Shoes to give them up now!

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I would rather do my Unit 1\* again...

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Architectural Model by Ibuku (E.955-2019)

---

The same one

## IF YOU COULD DO YOUR UNIT 2\* ESSAY AGAIN, WHICH OBJECT WOULD YOU CHOOSE TO WRITE ABOUT?

I would choose the same object, the Robin Day's television from the 1950s, just to compare the results between a completely online research carried out during lockdown and a post-lockdown investigation.

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The same

---

The same one: A Pendant by an unknown maker.

I'm happy with the object I chose - a photograph of the construction of Trajan's Column by Isabel Agnes Cowper from 1873. I'm interested in the chain of reproduction so it was the perfect object to explore different modes of 19th century reproductive technologies.

\* For Unit 1 we had to write an essay on the historiography of a design change. For Unit 2, we were asked to write analytical essay on a single object in the V&A's collection.

# FROM LEATHER POUCHES TO GOLDEN WALLS

## The Creation of 'Japanese Leather Papers' (1862-1892)

Victoria Bennett

On first thought, the idea of Japanese wallpapers designed to imitate golden, embossed 'Spanish' leathers for the drawing rooms and libraries of middle-class Britain appears to be another example of eclectic Victorian novelty. *Japanese Leather Papers*, as they were known, were brimming with cultural capital - exuding exoticism, artistry, and 'good taste' at a time of booming interest in domestic design. Although the fashion for these wall-hangings lasted a relatively short time - around seventeen years in Britain from 1883 - the peak of demand saw thousands of rolls being shipped to London every month, appearing in high-profile interiors including Buckingham Palace, alongside those designed by Oscar Wilde, Christopher Dresser, and E.W. Godwin. Despite this, they remain a lesser-known area of late-nineteenth century history.

Typically gilded and often garish, the motifs of this imitation-leather span flora and fauna to repeating geometric designs. A single-coloured ground provides a backdrop for embossed foliage, festoon, or brocade patterns, and the papers were hailed by design journals as the solution to finally tying a 'Japanese-themed' room together. Consumers were thrilled at the prospect of a hygienic, washable wallpaper which had been artfully hand-painted - a signifier of both modernity and tradition.

Here, the company *Rottmann Strome & Co.* is identified by scholars as the main supplier of the papers to Europe, with established factories in Tokyo and Yokohama employing a workforce of 150 'artists', and a showroom in the City of London.

Japanese Leather Papers make an interesting subject of study. Not quite an object of Japonisme due to British supervision, but often seen as too exotic for an average interior, the papers can be understood as a transnational object, simultaneously European and East Asian. How did a small souvenir item along Japan's Ise Kaido evolve to become a symbol of modernity within the British domestic interior? Was this a culmination of traditional European design and Japanese production methods, or an intriguing oddity?

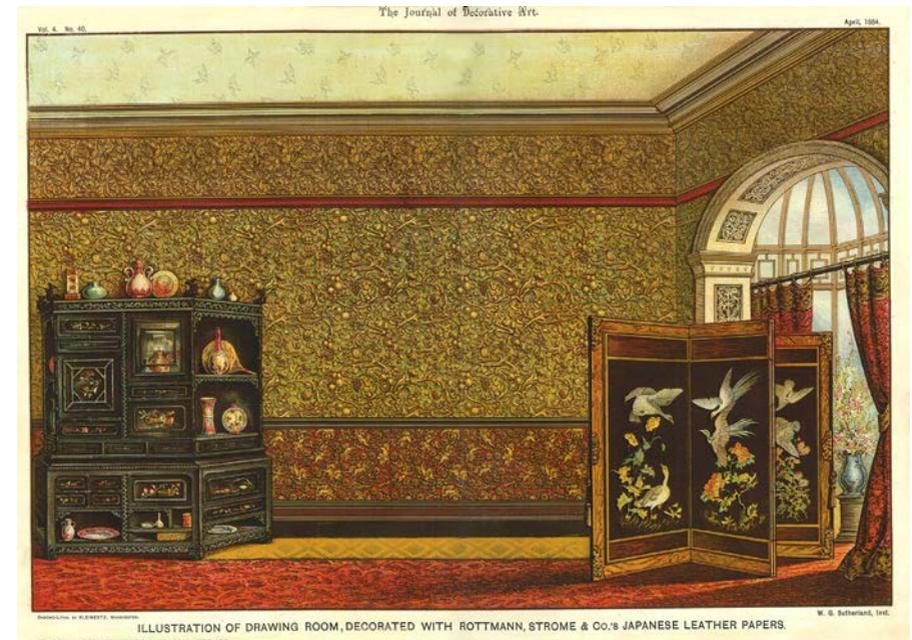


Illustration of Drawing Room, decorated with Rottmann Strome & Co.'s Japanese Leather Papers. Printed in the first Journal of Decorative Arts with colour plates, 1884. © Caroline Simpson Collection, Sydney Living Museum.



Experiments in kakishibu + leather-paper production: applying odourous kakishibu to kozō and mitsumata washi papers. © Victoria Bennett, 2022.

### An Analysis of the Influence, Impact and Design Evolution of *The Sleeping Beauty* from 1921 to 1946

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This research explores the reception and impact of Sadler's Wells' *Sleeping Beauty* in 1946 and analyses Oliver Messel's designs' role in it. It analyses Messel's set and costume designs by comparing them with *The Sleeping Princess*, the previous production by Diaghilev's Ballets Russes, designed by Léon Bakst.

*The Sleeping Princess* was involved in the formation process of a collective identity about 'Britishness'; the tensions between Russian émigrés and British modernists behind *The Sleeping Princess*'s production and reception laid an initial foundation for Britain to present *The Sleeping Beauty* in 1946 and had enabled the persistence of 'Britishness'. As for Messel, he differentiated his designs from Bakst's. Meanwhile, his design had achieved the evocation of both the experience of *The Sleeping Princess*, as well as the perception of landscape in Britain and the collective memory of the Second World War; it thus contributed to the reception of *The Sleeping Beauty*. Messel's designs took part in the formation process of 'Britishness', which helped Britain present a national art and persisted 'Britishness' in the post-war period.

This research also depicts the cultural exchanges between Russia and Britain. The collective nostalgia of both Russian émigrés and British modernists functioned as a strong motivation behind the production and reception of *The Sleeping Princess*. Yet, the financial (massive budget with little income) and political (the establishment of the USSR and the rise of communism) context had impacted its reception. The latter has even affected the trajectory of British ballet indirectly. It demonstrates how the political, cultural, social and financial context highly influences the theatrical productions and their receptions, which bring the productions into a wider discourse, that even themselves may not intend to.

In conclusion, this dissertation discussed the design evolution of *The Sleeping Beauty*, which leads to the core argument that *The Sleeping Princess* had laid the foundation for later professionals to present *The Sleeping Beauty*, while the later production had inherited some of the previous elements and created something new, which eventually achieved to represent 'British' art in the post-war period.



Costume design for *The Sleeping Beauty* by Oliver Messel. Acquired with the support of the National Lottery Heritage Fund, Art Fund and the Friends of the V&A © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.



Fan belonging to Julia Neilson, ca.1900 (made), China. Given by the British Theatre Museum Association. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.



Transcultural exchanges and the circulation of objects have always fascinated me. As a design historian, such passion not only motivates me to dive into Ballets Russes but also Chinese export ware.

In one of my master's research projects, I explored the circulation trajectory of a Chinese lacquer fan that once belonged to Julia Neilson, a renowned English actress in the late 19th century and early 20th century. Although made in China, this lacquer fan's identity changed throughout different stages of its journey. Made in Guangzhou, China, during the mid-19th century for the export market, it has colourfully painted paper leaf with lacquered wooden sticks, demonstrating the gold-paint skills of lacquer techniques and a combining style of both Chinese and western

paintings. Its nature of mass production reveals the historical contexts of the Canton System and world trade. The association with the export wave of lacquerware indicates its reception in the western world with the 'Chinoiserie' decorative style. As for its journey in the Edwardian era, it was used in a completely different context, from connecting with middle-class womanhood to being a representation of Edwardian opulence, which bonded with the duality of nostalgia and modernism from a view of orientalism, it made its way as a prop on London stage. Finally, here at V&A, after the campaign of establishing the theatre collection, it is stored in archives, far detached from its original production centre, functions and interactions.

# THE TRANSCULTURAL VALUES OF FLOWER PYRAMID: The Cultural Values of Dutch Delftware and its use in the UK Country House

Zhenlei Chen

The splendour of world ceramic art and design today is inseparable from the exchanges between different cultures. My thesis aims to provide some evidence for the importance of transcultural communication through the development of Dutch Delftware ceramic culture and put forward the following enlightenment for contemporary transcultural communication. The Overall research question for this dissertation is what the transcultural value of the Dutch Delftware flower pyramid is, and what is the cultural values of the Dutch Delftware and its use in the UK country house between the seventeenth and eighteenth century.

The ceramic products circumambient of us define us as well. The moment they are shaped by potters and decorated by painters, they manifest the culture that gives birth to them. Whether they are unique artworks or mass-produced tableware, their shapes and decorations are indicative of the demands, interests and tastes of a particular group of people and their technical merit. As a matter of fact, ceramic products are employed to decorate our houses and take on various forms including as a commodity, gift, souvenir or inheritance. Such designed objects tell us who we are, including our interests, experiences, educational background and social relations. Every object in our house has a story explaining how it got there, and design history helps us to think about this in new ways. In defect of recording and sharing, it is commonplace for these histories to disappear with each new owner. In *Ceramics: 400 Years of British Collecting in 100 Masterpieces*, Patricia F. Ferguson asserts, 'suppose history is equal to a collection of human events, ceramics are silent witnesses.'

The origin of the author's topic is a Flower pyramid ca.1695 from the Victoria and Albert Museum. The Victoria and Albert Museum archive records show that after the overthrow of the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) in China in 1644, Verenigde Oost Indische Compagnie (Dutch East India Company) did not have access to Chinese porcelains anymore, which urged potters in Delft to imitate blue-and-white potteries. In mansions in the Netherlands and England, suchlike stacked flower stands were used to display tulips and other natural or artificial



Dyrham Park, 17 November 2021,  
photograph by Zhenlei Chen

flowers. These potteries were large in size, complicated in structure and high in production cost. The flower pyramid vase is one of the pair, with a base supported by four royal lions with a ball on their palms. The square flower stand consists of nine layers, with each corner having a spout, and another flower stand contains a female bust. Each layer of the flower stand can be filled with water, and each spout can be used to contain flowers. What is more, there are holes on the top of the corolla so that more flowers can be placed.

This paper studies the Delftware collected by the Dyrham park, of which the establishment was proposed in the late seventeenth century by William Blathwayt (1649-1717) who was responsible for diplomatic and military affairs under the direct supervision of William III of England due to his outstanding leadership and Dutch-speaking ability. And his connection with the royal family helped transform this mansion into a showcase for exquisite ornaments of the Netherlands. Within the halls decorated by delicate wood panelling and Dutch tiles, an impressive Delftware collection is displayed. A 1710 household inventory shows that William Blathwayt's Delftware collection is undoubtedly one of the most precious in the UK.

Dyrham Park was created on the initiative of William Blathwayt (1649-1717), a court administrator in the late seventeenth century. William Blathwayt took charge of diplomacy and the military under the personal supervision of King William III because of his ability to speak Dutch. His close relationship with the royal family made this mansion a showcase for gorgeous decorations (wood panelling and Dutch tiles) and collections (ceramics). According to the inventory from 1710, Blathwayt's Delftware is undoubtedly one of the most important collections in England. It is estimated that Blathwayt purchased about 40 pieces of Delftware, at least 17 of which were manufactured by Adrianus Kocx, the owner of De Grieksche A and in the meantime the Queen's favourite supplier. The skilled and ambitious chief executive William Blathwayt (1649-1717) acquired the estate after marrying the heiress Mary Wynter (1650-91) in 1686. After the death of his wife in 1691, William Blathwayt made major improvements to the structure of Dyrham Park. During the journey to Hague and Amsterdam, King William III and Queen Mary II and their merchants bought fashion goods from all over the world. Even Blathwayt's gorgeous gardens are very royal, such as flower beds, fountains and sculptures. Fluent in multiple languages, Blathwayt served as the plantation income surveyor and auditor general (1680-1688) for overseeing the colony's income. Later, he used the money he earned from his efforts, to buy the post of Minister of War, which needed to manage the army and travel with the king. However, with the death of King William III, he was forced to step down and retire. The items he bought in Delft still exist in the collection at Dryham Park, and ceramics historians including Patricia Ferguson believe this to be one of the most significant collections still in the UK today. Unfortunately, there was no detailed invoice left, which is why the inventory is a key resource in the archives. As is mentioned by Patricia Ferguson, the National Trust advisor for ceramics, in her Report on the Ceramics, some people conceive that part of the Delftware originated from Queen Mary II's collection, since many of them resemble those unearthed in Het Loo in 1979, which were produced by Samuel Van Eenhorn for the Queen's new palace around 1685 to 1686. Other pieces of Delftware in Dyrham can



Dyrham Park. Photograph © Zhenlei Chen 2021.

be traced to the beginning of the Adrianus Kocx period, namely from 1687 to 1690. It is possible that they were utilized by Queen Mary II in England, and are replicas of items designed for the Queens's Cellar Diary in Het Loo, where Queen Marry II made flower arrangements. What further confirms the speculation is an entry recorded in the Inventory of 1703, which mentions that 'four [Delft] Queen flowerpots' and other tableware were displayed in the cabinet, while no similar description can be found in the Inventory of 1710.

Due to work needs, Blathwayt often went to the Netherlands. In 1668, his first diplomatic position was as British ambassador in Hague and personal secretary of Sir William Temple. After that, Blathwayt learned Dutch and stayed in Europe until 1673. Between 1692 and 1702, Blathwayt, as acting secretary of state for King William III, had to travel

to The Hague and Amsterdam every year. In addition, he owned an apartment in Hertloo. Of course, he had various opportunities to buy existing goods or commissioned goods. The most well-known Delftware in Dyrham is the large flower pyramid which is referred to as “Large Pyramid Delf Flowerpots” in the inventory of 1710 and can be found in the chimney in the lobby and the best bedrooms on stairs. This shape and its location are very interesting, as the bedroom would have been used as a main public area of state apartments at this time, therefore only the best guests and most high-status visitors would have visited these spaces. The chimney is also of interest as it would be the centre of the room and their colour would have added to its aesthetic value when the fire was not lit. These pyramid-shaped vases were utilized to make cut flowers, and thus could probably decorate fireplaces on summer days and would have been very colourful.

In both inventory of 1703 and 1710 more than 85 cases of Delftware are listed out, 33 of which seem to have survived and were thus published in 2000 by H. Rensing. It mainly consists of three distinct periods as is marked by the manufacturers. During the first phase, large plates with a historical scene were labelled with SVE standing for Samuel van Eenhoorn, whose date is around 1685. As for the second period when there exists the largest number of Delftware, AK meaning Adrianus Kocx is marked on Delftware. It is worth mentioning that Adrianus Kocx is the owner of Greek A. This patch of Delftware was made between 1687 and 1701, mostly around 1690 or specifically 1691 when his wife passed away. The two potters were commissioned to produce similar porcelains for Queen Mary II (1662-1694) in Het Loo and Hampton Court Palace. In the Water Gallery at Hampton Court Palace, there was a room filled with blue and white Delftware and painted furniture. The third subgroup is mostly unmarked and its style can be dated back to the early eighteenth century, which indicates that Blathwayt kept purchasing Delftware until his death in 1717.



Photographs © Zhenlei Chen 2021.



# DIRECTORY



**ANNIE LYE**

www.annielye.com  
Instagram: @chasiwbow  
annie.ws.lye@gmail.com



**ANNIE STANNARD**

www.thenatator.wordpress.com  
Instagram: @thenatator  
a.m.stannard@network.rca.ac.uk



**BERNADETTE VICTORIA SILVA**

Instagram: @bvsilva.design  
Twitter: @dsgnhistorian  
bernadette.silva@network.rca.ac.uk



**BESSIE MORRISSEY-MURIN**

bessie.morrissey-murin@network.rca.ac.uk



**CECILIA SEILERN UND ASPANG**

Instagram: @csaprojects  
csa@alumni.rca.ac.uk

## BIG TECH SMALL TECH



**CYRIENNE BUFFET**

cyrienne.buffet@gmail.com



**ELINE VANDENBOSCH**

Instagram: @eline\_vandenbosch  
246309@network.rca.a.uk



**EUPHEMIA FRANKLIN**

www.euphemiafranklin.com  
www.playfulkimono.com  
Instagram: @euphemia.work  
euphemia.franklin@network.rca.ac.uk



**HANNAH HEAF**

[hannah.heaf@network.rca.ac.uk](mailto:hannah.heaf@network.rca.ac.uk)



**JOANA ALBERNAZ DELGADO**

Twitter: @joana\_a\_delgado  
Instagram: @joanaalbernazdelgado  
[joana.delgado@network.rca.ac.uk](mailto:joana.delgado@network.rca.ac.uk)



**JORDAN LEE**

[245716@network.rca.ac.uk](mailto:245716@network.rca.ac.uk)  
[jordan222.lee@outlook.com](mailto:jordan222.lee@outlook.com)

## PULLING STRINGS

**KAREN NICHOLSON**

[k.l.nicholson1@gmail.com](mailto:k.l.nicholson1@gmail.com)  
[karen.nicholson@network.rca.ac.uk](mailto:karen.nicholson@network.rca.ac.uk)



**LI-XUAN TEO**

[teolixuan@gmail.com](mailto:teolixuan@gmail.com)



**LUÍS GONÇALO VICENTE**

Instagram: @luisgoncalovicente  
Twitter: @luisgvicente96  
[luis.goncalo.v@gmail.com](mailto:luis.goncalo.v@gmail.com)



**MAGOT DRAYSON**

Instagram: @margotdrayson  
[margot.j.drayson@network.rca.ac.uk](mailto:margot.j.drayson@network.rca.ac.uk)



**MEGAN GRAHAM**

Instagram: @megan.eleanor.graham  
[245164@network.rca.ac.uk](mailto:245164@network.rca.ac.uk)



**PHOEBE EVANS**

[phoebe.evans@hotmail.com](mailto:phoebe.evans@hotmail.com)  
[799966@network.rca.ac.uk](mailto:799966@network.rca.ac.uk)



**POLINA DAVYDOVA**

Twitter: @plndvdv  
[polina.davydova@network.rca.ac.uk](mailto:polina.davydova@network.rca.ac.uk)



**SARAH MURSAL**

www.mursal.com  
Instagram: @sarahria  
mursaldesign1@gmail.com  
249844@network.rca.ac.uk



**SHUYAN YAO**

Instagram: @shuyanyao\_  
799964@network.rca.ac.uk



**SONYA BATTLA**

battlasonya@gmail.com



**VICTORIA BENNETT**

www.victoriabennett.co.uk  
Instagram: @diesoft  
Twitter: @victoriabnntt  
victoria.bennett@network.rca.ac.uk



**XINGHE CHEN**

www.xinghechen.co.uk  
Instagram: @sylviexhc  
xinghe.chen@network.rca.ac.uk



**ZHENLEI CHEN**

Instagram: @osborn\_chenn  
zchen@drewatts.com  
249146@network.rca.ac.uk

# OUR THANKS TO

## PROGRAMME ACADEMIC STAFF

Marta Ajmar  
Sarah Cheang  
Josie Kane  
Simon Sladen  
Spike Sweeting  
Simona Valeriani

## VISITING LECTURERS

### /V&A CURATORS

Tanveer Ahmed  
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Justine Boussard  
Emily Candela  
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## ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

Sophie Arp  
Tess Piggott

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