

## **Utilizing Archives and Collections: Textile Education, Industry and Practice II**

### **EDITORIAL**

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This is the second special issue of the *Journal of Textile Design Research and Practice* in response to the 'Utilizing Archives and Collections: Textile Education, Industry and Practice' call for submissions. As with the first issue (Volume 7, Issue 2: November 2019), collaboration is central to the investigations, projects and activities communicated through the articles. Comprising research paper, position papers, discursive interview and exhibition review, this issue brings together varying perspectives and practices surrounding the utilization of archives and collections connected to textiles.

The first paper 'History is Always in Fashion: The Practice of Artifact-based Dress History in The Academic Collection' centres on the Historic Costume and Textiles Collection (HCTC), University of Delaware, United States of America (USA). The authors present a series of studies whereby HCTC artefacts were used for research and teaching projects, including 'hands-on' working by students. The case studies described give examples of collection utilization by different programmes at the University. The later examples reported outline projects undertaken by staff and students working together. Various activities ensure the legacy of the HCTC beyond the educational institution, with exhibitions a key mode of dissemination. Following this, three position papers outline activities utilizing archives and collections in the United Kingdom (UK). 'An archive collection for collaborative partnerships and pedagogic textile practice' centres on the Museum of Bolton industrial and textile archive collections. Findings from a student project identified experimental, blended and immersive learning and teaching approaches to utilizing the archive. Subsequent activity includes student created artefacts becoming part of the Museum collection. The next paper focuses on an industrial textile collection from a weaving factory in Northern Ireland. 'Reviving the William Liddell Damask Design Collection' received Heritage Lottery Funding to make the collection accessible, undertake road shows and curate an exhibition. This archive comprises numerous glass plates of jacquard damask weaving of Irish Linen. The volume of plates made the digitization and investigation surrounding content and significance overwhelming. However, the authors, based at Ulster University, created a taxonomy which made sorting and organizing manageable to enable further study. To conclude this project, local workers connected to the collection will be invited to launch events which provide insight into methods of textile creation and changing design styles throughout the company's history. The third position paper 'The Collection of the Knitting and Crochet Guild [KCG] of the UK: a critical review of its usages' is written from the perspective of author as volunteer. The KCG collection differs to those discussed so far as its custodians are a Guild, a membership organisation based in the UK. Located in West Yorkshire, the collection is extensive, comprising a huge array of artefacts and documents relating to (hand and machine) knitting and crochet. Visits facilitated by volunteers can be made to view the collection, other modes of access include 'truck shows', workshops and presentations by members, items loaned to Guild branches

and participation in hobby and leisure community shows. Working with the University of Huddersfield, students undertake placements at the collection, further utilization is by other students, researchers, designers and makers. As artefacts within the collection tend to be produced by 'ordinary women' domestically, utilization for feminist research is identified as potential activity. Other means to disseminate this collection include via the Guild's journal and Facebook page.

'Talking Textiles, Making Value: Catalysing Fashion, Dress, and Textiles Heritage in the Midlands' comprises the discursive transcript from a knowledge exchange event (funded by the Museum-University Partnership Initiative) surrounding archives and collections located in the East Midlands, UK. Bringing together design, curation, research and student perspectives, the practitioner group interview evidences potential for collaboration through co-produced network activities. Progress has already been made with the examples provided, which include presentations, student projects, residences, workshops and funding bid formulation. The final article in this special issue is an exhibition review of 'Katagami in Practice: Japanese Stencils in the Art School'. The exhibition at Asia House curated by Zoe Hendon, Museum of Domestic Architecture (MoDA), Middlesex University, formed part of an 18-month research project funded by Arts Council England. The review provides insight into MoDA's Silver Studio (1880-1963) collection and in particular the katagami stencils thought to have been bought into the Studio as examples of Japanese design influence. The exhibition reported upon explored katagami through contemporary creative and research practices to extend understanding and collection utilization. A conference accompanied the exhibition and digital resources exist to articulate project activities, this resource presents findings and outputs beyond the life of the project to wider audiences. Across the two 'Utilizing Archives and Collections: Textile Education, Industry and Practice' special issues, exhibitions appear central to disseminating the products and outcomes of textile design research and practice. To ensure lasting impact of the work undertaken there appears to be scope to further consider digital methods and platforms to extend reach and impact.