

THE ASSOCIATION OF DRESS HISTORIANS

Winter Seminar Series 2023-2024

First Friday of every month from October 2023 to March 2024
18:00 GMT | 14:00 EST | 06:00 NZST (SAT)

Convened by Irene Calvi and Amelia O'Mahony-Brady

Returning for its second year, this online seminar series will be held the first Friday of the month from October 2023 to February 2024 at 6pm (UK time).

Each webinar will be recorded and made available to our members through the newsletter.

Friday 13 October, 2023 | 18:00-19:00 GMT

With Maureen Selina Laverty

(PhD candidate, Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Trondheim)

Hosts: Irene Calvi (introduction), Amelia O'Mahony-Brady (discussion chair), Tiago Abreu (Zoom support).

Presentation Title:

Sensory Nourishment: inclusive clothing design practices for neurodivergent sensory needs.

Abstract:

Clothes are the most intimate artefacts that touch our skin. Everyday our moving bodies are shaping and being shaped by what we wear. This dynamic dialogue is tactile, sonic and kinaesthetic. The sensations that unfold can be experienced more intensely by people on the autism spectrum and/or with ADHD. Bad sensory experiences can be disablingly overwhelming. However, sensations that are more consciously crafted have the power to comfort and enable.

Maureen will introduce her PhD research project where she collaborates with neurodivergent individuals to explore sensory overwhelm (and nourishment) in relation to clothing design. She will share the stories of some of her research participants who feel that clothes are often not made for them. She will introduce how they are working with a design process that includes all the senses, and her plans to translate the research findings into practical solutions in the clothing industry.

Biography:

Maureen is a fashion designer and action researcher passionate about inclusive design. She is currently in the 3rd year of a practice-based PhD, at NTNU in Norway, that explores how we can better design clothing for and with neurodivergent individuals with diverse sensory needs. Her work is greatly shaped by her training as a tailor on Savile Row where she was educated in materiality, craftsmanship and designing for unique bodily needs. She holds a bachelors in fashion design from NCAD, Dublin. She spent 3 years as a menswear pattern-cutter in London with fashion houses such as Alexander McQueen. These skills were then adapted during 5 years developing medical wearable technology in Ireland and the Netherlands. In 2020, she completed a masters in product design engineering at NTNU in Norway, with a particular focus on participatory design.

Friday 3 November, 2023 | 18:00-19:00 GMT

With Pietro Rubino
(Jewellery Historian)

Hosts: Amelia O'Mahony-Brady (introduction), Irene Calvi (discussion chair).

Presentation Title:

How can I live without a diamond vanity case?

A brief debate about functional jewellery

Abstract:

The jewel has always had a functional purpose, both symbolic and concrete; no other product of human creativity evokes so many possibilities for studying society, anthropology, history of fashion, history of culture.

Starting from the antique fibulae to the modern clutch, passing through the commemorative jewels, the presentation aims to analyse how museums narrate this complex of meanings, their reflection in contemporary society and the cultural value that jewellery has covered and covers nowadays.

Biography:

Pietro Rubino graduated in November 2022 in History of Art at University of Turin, discussing research about the Italian liberty jewellery and its relationship with the contemporary European jewellery languages. He is now assistant in the Jewelry Department at Cambi Auction House and works between Turin, Milan, Genoa and Rome.

Friday 1 December, 2023 | 18:00-19:00 GMT

With Ilaria Trame

(International Library of Fashion Research, Oslo)

Hosts: Amelia O'Mahony-Brady (introduction), Irene Calvi (discussion chair), Rachel Sayers (Zoom support).

Presentation Title:

A fashion library beyond its shelves

Abstract:

After nearly a year in November 2022, Ilaria Trame, librarian for International Library of Fashion Research, looks back at the library's origin, its physical space and the most important projects to reflect on the contributions it has brought to the international field of fashion studies and library studies. As its seed donation came from the private archive of cultural theorist Steven Mark Klein in his New York apartment to Elise By Olsen, the library has since been enriched, activated and vitalised with editorial, curatorial and research projects in collaboration with the National Museum for Art, Architecture and Design of Oslo as well as many international institutions.

Biography:

Ilaria Trame holds a BA in Fashion Design from IUAV University of Venice. She later moved onto the field of academia and graduated from the MA in Fashion Studies at Parsons Paris in May 2022 with a thesis titled *Beyond the Library: A Study of Fashion Documents' Archival Spaces*. Her research interests revolve around archival research and libraries. She now works as a librarian and archivist for the International Library of Fashion Research in Oslo as of March 2023.

Friday 5 January, 2024 | 18:00-19:00 GMT

With Sara Donaldson

(Art, Design and Fashion Historian; PhD student, Ulster University)

Hosts: Irene Calvi (introduction), Amelia O'Mahony-Brady (discussion chair), Rachel Sayers (Zoom support).

Presentation Title:

A Hidden History of Cloth Finishing in Ireland': C.H. Bates & Co of Kilmainham Mills, Dublin

Abstract:

Kilmainham Mills, Dublin, is believed to be the last intact fulling mill in Ireland, dating from the twelfth century. It changed function many times until 1904 when it was returned to cloth finishing by Charles Herbert Bates of Huddersfield. Ownership of C.H. Bates & Co. soon passed to Harry Archer, also of Huddersfield, and remained in his family until 1973.

Bates and Archer belonged to a tradition of Yorkshire businessmen establishing woollen mills in Ireland, but C.H. Bates & Co. was unique in specialising in the finishing of woollens and tweeds for handweavers all over Ireland, from Avoca in Wicklow to Magee, McNelis, McNutt, and Molloy and Sons in Donegal. Woollen cloth was sent from the most rural parts of Ireland for finishing in Kilmainham before delivery to the most prestigious couture salons in Dublin: Irene Gilbert, Sybil Connolly, Neilí Mulcahy and Clodagh all chose fine tweeds finished at Kilmainham Mills for their designs.

Despite such illustrious clients, C.H. Bates & Company's contribution to the history of the Irish textile and fashion industries remains unrecorded. As the only descendant of Harry Archer, Sara wishes to redress this omission, having inherited his firm's business archive, rich in material from the 1930s-1960s.

Biography:

Sara Donaldson is an art, design and fashion historian and PhD Researcher from Dublin. She lectures in the History of Art, Design and Fashion, Visual Culture, Design Culture and Contextual Studies at Griffith College Dublin and on the Fine and Decorative Arts courses at the Institute for Professional Auctioneers and Valuers. Sara has also taught at University College Dublin, the National College of Art and Design, Technological University Dublin and Limerick School of Art and Design.

During her time as Research Fellow at the National Gallery of Ireland, Sara had curatorial responsibility for the French collection and was curator and assistant curator of several exhibitions. She is author of the *National Gallery of Ireland Companion Guide* (2009) and continues to work as a consultant lecturer and writer for the National Gallery. She has contributed to the *Irish Arts Review* and *Ireland's Antiques and Period Properties*. Sara holds a BA and an MLitt in History of Art, an MA in History of Design and a Postgraduate Certificate in Education. In 2022 Sara commenced a PhD at Ulster University and in 2023 she was awarded a scholarship from Northern Bridge Consortium (Arts and Humanities Research Council, UK) to support her doctoral research.

Friday 2 February, 2024 | 18:00-19:00 GMT

With Rachele Didero
(CEO Cap_able; Phd Student, Politecnico of Milan)

Hosts: Amelia O'Mahony-Brady (introduction), Irene Calvi (discussion chair).

Abstract:

Rachele Didero presents the textile with adversarial pattern she created and patented that lead to the creation of her startup Cap_able.

This innovative textile protects the wearer's biometric data from facial recognition technology, thanks to the algorithm-generated 'patches' that adorn Cap_able's knitwear, which cause AI either to confuse the wearer with an animal, or simply not detect them at all.

Cap_able designs don't act as invisibility cloaks: in no way do they hinder the success of in-person security devices. Instead, they interrupt the improper use of online person detection, restoring the wearer's agency by safeguarding their privacy rights.

Biography:

Rachele is a Fashion and Textile Designer who graduated from Politecnico di Milano with a big passion for integrating ethics and technology to generate eco-innovation. This research keeps growing thanks to her work as a Ph.D. student in the Knit Lab research group of the Design Department at Politecnico di Milano and the Tangible Media Group at the MIT Media Lab.

Her Ph.D. research aims to design innovative products from a technological and ethical point of view by investigating problems of our present that will shape our future. The goal, focused on privacy, is twofold: to protect facial biometric data and create awareness of the improper use of facial recognition technology, a problem which, if neglected, could freeze the individual's rights.

Friday 1 March, 2024 | 18:00-19:00 GMT

With Laura Fitzachary

(Fashion Historian and Historical Consultant; Museum Educator on sabbatical)

Hosts: Irene Calvi (introduction), Amelia O'Mahony-Brady (discussion chair), Rachel Sayers (Zoom support).

Presentation Title:

Digging Up Dress History

Abstract:

From votive offerings to coveted heirlooms, the relationship between people and what they wore can be examined from some of the most insightful archaeological findings. It can be argued that such findings do not simply reveal what was worn, but also how humans have presented themselves throughout time.

By focusing on particular objects, such as Bronze Age hair ornaments, early medieval footwear and the late 16th century Shinrone gown, the time period covered in this talk stretches over 3000 years - but it will illuminate the value of examining the intersection between archaeology, art, dress and historical reconstruction. Such personal objects have helped craft an image of what life was like in Ireland throughout various time periods. But recent archaeological discoveries have also upended our tendency to affix dress culture to strict time periods.

Through historical reconstruction, experimental archaeology, dress history, art history and the anthropological context of dress practice (and also burial practice), personal items that have been 'dug up' are examined at an entirely new angle. The point where all these fields meet. Therefore, this new focus on particular objects within the history of dress in Ireland causes them to transcend the term 'artefact', instead reflecting a very important aspect of humanity itself - our appearance.

Biography:

Laura Fitzachary is a historian and historical consultant based in Dublin, Ireland. After spending nearly a decade working in the museum sector in Ireland, she spent the last year living in Paris, writing for the art market and working in the luxury fashion sector. She is known online as @seekthehistoric where she delves into the history of art, beauty and medieval art and architecture. An unlikely triad of interests, she has been published in various fields (including public archaeology, social history and medieval art history), appeared across all media platforms as a historical consultant and even hosted her own radio shows and live events - the list of which you can find on her website: www.seekthehistoric.com. Interdisciplinary connections and collaborations lies at the heart of what Laura does, with a particular focus on highlighting the importance of fashion, dress and beauty history in Ireland and beyond.