

Museum International

No 179 (Vol XLV, n° 3, 1993)

Fashion and costume museums

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Editorial

In a superb book entitled *Appearances: Fashion Photography*,¹ the British art historian and exhibition curator Martin Harrison cites Sir Thomas More's description of Utopia as an austere country where everyone dressed alike and where each family was expected to make its own clothes of natural-coloured wool. Harrison goes on to evoke Bertrand Russell's comment that such a Utopia would lack the variety indispensable to happiness.

Clothes, then, represent much more than simple protection against the elements. They add the 'variety' so dear to Russell and communicate a host of signs and symbols about their wearer; in essence, they are a visual language that permits us to 'read' one another before we even speak. They also transmit powerful messages from the past, of epochs and cultures long vanished; their cut and colour speak volumes about the way we once were.

Museums have long recognized that fashion is a serious subject of study. More than 100 museums throughout the world are devoted to clothing and dress, not to mention those that specialize in shoes, cosmetics, embroidery, fur, jewellery, lace, needlework, silk, textiles, uniforms and weaving, to name just some of fashion's adjuncts. The how and why of a collection, its conservation, presentation, restoration, documentation, identification . . . these are but a few of the issues museums must deal with when acquiring and displaying historic garments.

This issue presents an overview of these questions, and attempts to show how they were resolved in a broad variety of contexts. We thank most warmly Elizabeth Ann Coleman of the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston, Texas (United States) who acted as co-ordinator and brought a wealth of fashion and costume experience to the task of choosing themes and authors. In her introductory article, she explains why clothes are crucial to an understanding of history and cultures.

Readers will also find a thought-provoking article on how museum staff and visitors relate to one another, a description of France's exemplary battle against illicit traffic in the art world and a tale of museum detection to identify Pushkin's friends.

M.L.

Note

1. Martin Harrison, *Appearances: Fashion Photography*, London, Jonathan Cape Ltd, 1991.

Preserving human packaging

Elizabeth Ann Coleman

Fashion and costume collections offer rare insights into the history of human populations and present specific challenges of presentation and preservation. Elizabeth Ann Coleman, Curator of Textiles and Costume at the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston, Texas, and Chairperson of the ICOM Costume Committee, describes the various problems which are explored in detail in this issue.

In many societies around the world everyday articles of attire are considered as expendable as food packaging: each is designed merely to enhance the desirability of and, in some way, protect the object covered. So why should museums of art, science, history and geography collect, preserve and interpret artefacts of apparel and personal adornment? Why should they be interested in objects of such a seemingly ephemeral nature? Because articles of personal adornment, usually found in museum collections under the heading of 'Costume', are the most immediate and personal links with the five questions that everyone – researcher or visitor – asks: what, where, how, when and why?

Articles of personal adornment do indeed tell the story of humankind. In contemporary academic jargon these artefacts are material culture of a personal nature. Even in a world growing ever more homogenized, objects of attire still speak of a cultural uniqueness. And they do it with rare and definite precision. Some aspect will set the piece apart and define its role in a society. An example would be the traditional Japanese *slippa*, mule-like footwear slipped on when entering a home or other area where shoes or wooden *geta* would destroy the flooring. After generations the conformation of this footwear remains constant, traditional. But to satisfy the current rage among the Japanese for designer names, particularly those associated with the fashion capital of Paris, pairs of these informal footwear now step out with Dior, Cardin, etc., stitched across the instep. Such footwear is at home in Tokyo, not in Paris.

Interpretation of articles of dress can be fraught with pitfalls. Religious and cultural considerations come into play. Regional variations of dress can be sharp and distinct, defining a unit of humanity as small

as a village or tribe. While this aspect of dress has been understood by generations of costume historians, ethnographers and wearers, many museum installations still muddle items of apparel, presenting a 'pidgin' costume. Such a presentation can be the result of not having an entire ensemble to draw upon, including jewellery and other accessories. To this day, an overzealous and unknowing staff may try, by mixing and matching, to fashion, for example, a 'Norwegian' costume. Research will reveal the historical precedent for such lax interpretation. The Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, New York, is home to a portion of an important collection of Russian costume and textile artefacts collected in Russia prior to 1900. In 1911, twenty years before the collection entered the museum, it was featured in an illustrated *Studio* publication. Detailed analysis of the photographs reveals that accessories, in particular, moved from model to model. Yet each model is identified as wearing the garb associated with a different region. When the collection was first shown in North American museums yet another kaleidoscopic combination was presented.

Historically, museums have found that the public has the greatest comprehension of costume when it is presented on dressed figures. However, a dilemma usually exists. What the collection holds and what the reality was may not be the same. Even when working with items of apparel from one's own culture it is only too easy to create a mannequin montage of that which never was. Time and function can be at odds because a collection may not hold the 'right' artefact. Such blatant errors are less likely to happen with more recent material with which some familiarity exists. In some areas romanticism takes over. For Western dresses of the 1850s and 1860s the Hollywood film costuming committee of the 1930s and early 1940s established the shape

of the crinoline. To this day neither the film and fashion prints, nor contemporary photographs, dress construction or the crinoline cages themselves, seem to dictate the dimensions of hoop skirts in museum exhibitions.

The necessity of understanding the reality of items of apparel is important as it bridges many fields. Those who have studied aspects of dress, whether regional or fashionable, can frequently offer assistance to art historians in approximating the date of a work. However, it must be remembered that there are always traps like the posthumous portrait of Miss Mary Telfair of Savannah, Georgia, painted nearly twenty-five years after her death. Miss Telfair sits for posterity attired in a most remarkable assortment of artist's costume props, all unrelated in time and to the sitter. For social historians the dress dialogue between people is an important matter. For example, Platt Hall in Manchester, England, a municipal museum devoted to the study of apparel, invited its audience to analyse the dressed mannequin population of a railway platform based on the forms of dress.

Materials and machines

New materials have created both the potential for new clothing and the necessity of protective attire. For centuries four fibres, in addition to skins, clothed much of the world: wool, linen, cotton and silk. In the past century, beginning with the introduction of artificial silk, there has been an explosion of materials that have been utilized to clothe humanity. Many of these fibres grew out of explorations in other fields: nylon was developed for military use and mylar for extraterrestrial exploration, while byon, a fibre created for the treatment of extensive burns, is now used



Louis Faurel (*Vogue France*). Reproduced by courtesy of Éditions du Chêne, Paris. All rights reserved

for fashionable apparel. And in this world driven more and more by chemical compounding both the new materials and newly devised protective clothing meet in an attempted buffer against catastrophic circumstances, whether synthetic or natural. In 1982 the Science Museum of London presented a stimulating and informative exhibition, 'Covering Up', which looked at modes of protective attire from both a historical as well as a contemporary perspective. Performing arts costumes, sports attire, fire-fighting and medical uniforms were part of the display.

Construction of clothes offers insight into technological advances apart from the development of fibres. In an era before machines sewed seams, made lace, embroidered designs and cut out hundreds of pattern pieces at a time, these details gave clues to skills all but lost today. Indeed the complexity of some of the handwork is

Cover photo of Appearances: Fashion Photography by Martin Harrison (London, Jonathan Cape Ltd, 1991).

'The necessity of understanding the reality of items of apparel is important . . .' An example of a perfectly rendered historical reconstruction: model of a Pueblo village from the south-west United States, Gallery of the Americas, Musée de l'Homme, Paris.



© MUSECOM, Paris

such that it cannot be replicated by present-day 'advanced' technology. The nature of the garment is always determined by the material from which it is made. Clothes constructed according to tailoring or dress-making techniques require one approach and understanding of fabric, while those that are draped tend to rely more on the available technology of the loom.

From a historian's point of view the subject of clothing is broadly challenging. Clothes document not only the trends of fashion but also offer territory for the rediscovery of the vital economic importance of apparel. Articles of apparel allow us to approach, in a very personal form, our immediate ancestors and see what they really wore. They also allow us to contemplate what some renowned personage may have owned. Garments tell us that people, then as now, were short or fat, tall or skinny, rich or poor, disabled or robust. We learn that animal skins conveying a spot motif such as miniver (or its less costly lookalike ermine) or leopard have been the choice of rulers. We learn that for demonstrating social position pelts have been worn with much of their decorative quality on the exterior, while for warmth the fur was placed towards the body.

There are items of personal adornment which make us ask serious questions about our fellow humans in their quest for 'beauty'. There are the false calves for the late Georgian dandy, bum-rolls for the Elizabethan lady, bound feet requiring deformed miniaturized footwear for the late Ming Dynasty Chinese lady of rank, etc.

Display and storage

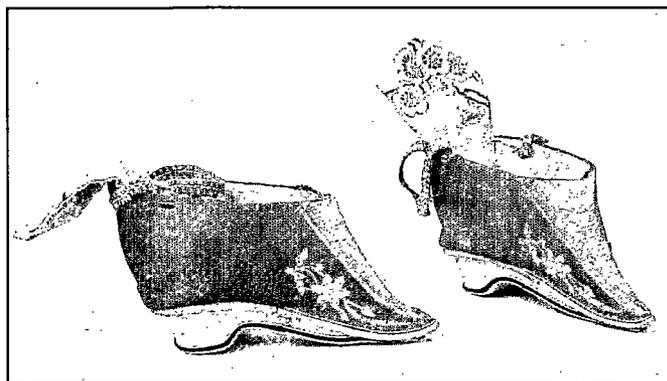
Because of the piecemeal nature by which most articles of attire enter museum collections, and because so many pieces are needed to outfit a 'completely dressed' figure, not all exhibitions of clothing are successful presentations. Whether shown three-dimensionally on a figure or two-dimensionally, clothing from a different time and place demands extraordinary sensitivity and aesthetic understanding, skills that are not always at the fingertips of curators, conservators or display staff. They recreate a form of soft sculpture which may be loaded with cultural symbolism. While the facts implied in the outfit may be right, the form presented may be an aberration.

Maintaining publicly accessible wardrobes is one of the most labour-intensive curato-

rial and conservation activities within a museum. Unlike almost every other artefact in a museum collection, an article of apparel must usually be reshaped when displayed. These are the quirks of garments and accessories, fabrics and conservation. Within the relatively new field of costume conservation, procedures vary from aggressive, invasive treatments to simple stabilization. At all costs nothing that is not reversible should be done to an artefact. Concerning storage, the ability to 'read' the best treatment for the artefact is the safest and sanest route to preservation. Handling is the greatest threat to any object. Storage areas must accommodate a wide range of disparate materials, all of which coexist in closest proximity: furs and feathers; plastics and metals; glass and silks; beetle wings and bone, etc.

Storage areas should be clean and free of sharp edges and clutter. They should be dedicated spaces in which only one function takes place: the storage of collection costume material. Storage units should be of inert materials and it is best if a modular format is followed to allow for the changing configuration of the collection. Similar materials should be stored in a manner that offers appropriate support and security.

Clothes let us look at who we/they are, who we/they were. They let us explore concepts of beauty, of social stratification and rites of passage, of technology and commerce, of means of protection and sexual attraction. They let us know that the need of one climatic zone may not be the same as another, nor are the clothes necessitated by one profession applicable to another. As much as, if not more than any other artefact, articles of personal adornment belong in institutions devoted to the understanding of the human race and its historical development throughout the world. ■



© Collection Association pour l'Étude et la Documentation des Textiles d'Asie, Paris, No. 570

Note

The ICOM Costume Committee has published guidelines on basic procedures for handling and conservation. The document is available from the Committee Secretary, Marilina Perkkio, Espoon kaupunginmuseo, Thuraniinpuistotie 10, 02700 Kauniainen (Finland). Price \$6.

Pair of embroidered satin women's shoes for bound feet, 14 cm long. China, Qing Dynasty (nineteenth century).

The Kyoto Costume Institute: looking West

Akiko Fukai

Why a Western costume institute in Japan? The author explains how a desire to learn more about Western culture led to the creation of a most unusual institution, of which Akiko Fukai is Chief Curator.

The Japanese have totally adapted to Western clothing. The process of adaptation was especially rapid after the Second World War. At that time, since Western clothing had not grown out of any Japanese traditions, it was viewed as practical and efficient wear that could meet the demands of internationalization and modernization in Japan. But as we have learned more about Western clothes, we have understood that they are just as much a form of artistic expression as the kimono, which has always been considered to be an art form. With this discovery came the desire to study the history and social background behind Western clothing. More particularly, this brought about the desire to create a place to study this clothing more closely.

In 1975, the exhibition 'Inventive Clothes', organized by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, was brought to Kyoto. This exhibition was the first occasion on which the art and culture of Western clothing was shown in Japan, and it made a deep impression on the Japanese public. In part because of this response, but also because it was generally recognized that further understanding and knowledge of Western costume was needed, the Kyoto Costume Institute (KCI), chairman Koichi Tsukamoto, was established in April 1978 under charter by the Japanese Government Agency for Cultural Affairs.

Kyoto residents are known for their deep interest in clothing, and have always considered the kimono, with the techniques involved in its design and fabrication, to be not only an enjoyable necessity but also an enduring form of art. It was therefore natural for the first institution in Japan to specialize in the study of the history of Western fashion to be located in Kyoto, the historic former capital of Japan and the centre of traditional Japanese culture.

The Kyoto Costume Institute recognizes and appreciates fashionable clothes as products of the artistic process as well as examples of fine craftsmanship and ingenuity, and acknowledges the merit of studying clothing in order to predict and to better comprehend how fashion will evolve in the future. The language of fashion is international. As an expression of culture, style and business, the impact of fashion today is felt simultaneously in centres such as New York, Paris and Tokyo. We hope that the KCI will be a place where modern designers and emerging talent may find inspiration for their creativity that will enable them to incorporate their own unique sensitivities into the art and craft of fashion. Our culture, our needs, habits and body shapes are all influences that affect new fashions.

The Kyoto Costume Institute is the only institute in Japan specializing in the study of Western fashion. It has a staff of eighteen, including five administrative posts (two curators, one assistant curator, two curatorial assistants), one librarian, one conservator and eight restorers. Its activities encompass research, collection, restoration, preservation and exhibition. The collection includes clothing (mainly concentrating upon womenswear) and related materials: underpinnings, lingerie, accessories, as well as books and other printed materials, from the sixteenth century to the present. The KCI is known among costume professionals for its unique mounted exhibitions and catalogues. It also publishes a biannual bulletin, *Dresstudy*.

Our collection encompasses such rare treasures as an early seventeenth-century gold and polychrome embroidered bodice, as well as contemporary clothing by widely known Japanese designers such as Issey Miyake and Rei Kawakubo and by distinguished non-Japanese designers. We are

especially interested in underpinnings such as corsets, bustles and crinoline cages, because of their sculptural quality and also because they render the lines and shapes which are unique to Western clothing.

Authenticity and an eye for detail

The KCI also creates mannequins. On the occasion of its first exhibition, 'Evolution of Fashion', which was mounted in conjunction with the Costume Institute of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, we realized that it was highly important to have mannequins that could correctly express the style of a period. The KCI researched the body shape of nineteenth-century women and a designer from a leading mannequin manufacturer in Japan then created a nineteenth-century female mannequin which, due to the special structures of the joints, could assume postures that represent human-like kinetic functions. Ms Stella Blum, former Curator of the Costume Institute of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, offered technical assistance in the design of the mannequins.

The KCI also respects the importance of mounting costumes on the mannequins as correctly and attractively as possible. As a result, we can say that we have been able to create attractive effects in our exhibitions. Since that first exhibition, we have continued to develop our mannequins and now have four period styles, representing the eighteenth century, the Empire, the nineteenth century, and the *belle époque*. They have been recognized by costume museums all over the world (forty museums and institutions in fifteen countries) as the definitive solution of an adaptable mannequin for the requirements of historical costumes.

The exhibition 'Evolution in Fashion 1835-1895' was organized by the KCI at the



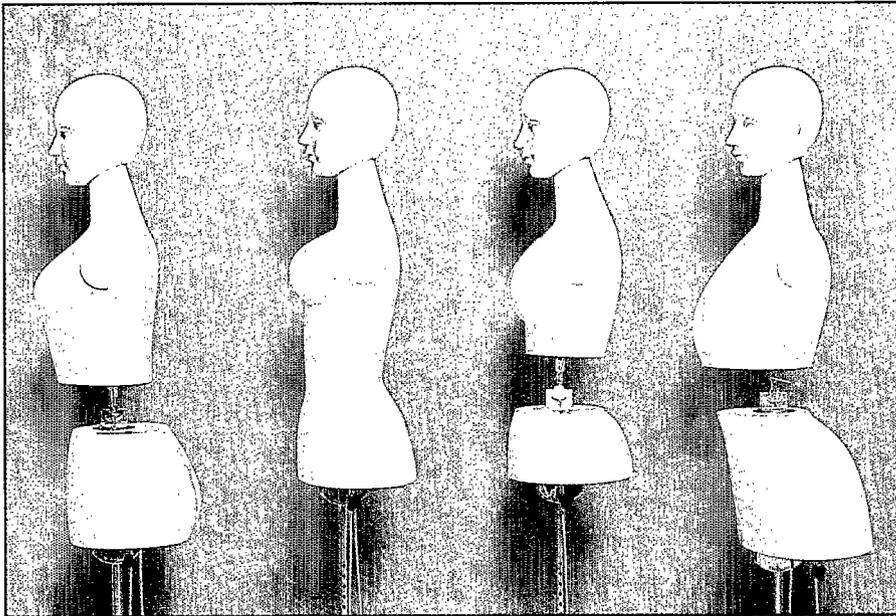
© Kyoto Costume Institute, Japan

Poster, 'Revolution in Fashion', 1989.

National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto, in 1980. It focused on the dynamic evolution of Western fashion in the nineteenth century, since it was towards the end of this period that the Japanese first adapted to Western clothing.

In 1983, in Tokyo and Kyoto, the exhibition 'Undercover Story' represented steps in the evolution of underwear from the eighteenth century to the present day, emphasizing the important relationships between underwear and outerwear. It was held under the joint auspices of the KCI and the Fashion Institute of Technology of New York. After that, in 1985, our exhibition 'Mariano Fortuny' first introduced to Japan Fortuny's famous pleated dresses in Greek style, as well as dresses stencil-printed with oriental designs.

Our fourth exhibition, entitled 'Revolution in Fashion 1715-1815', was held in the National Museum of Modern Art in 1989. Major original costumes were exhibited covering the period from 1715 to 1815, when France dominated elegance and fashion design. The exhibition coincided with the bicentenary of the French Revolution. On display were 130 costumes and accessories, including styles for men, women



Four types of period mannequin (from left to right), eighteenth century, the Empire, nineteenth century and the belle époque.

and children, as well as undergarments, shoes, fans, jewellery, lace, embroidery and other items. This exhibition extended from the luxurious, elegant and elaborate style of eighteenth-century rococo to the simple, neat neo-classic designs of the early 1800s. 'Revolution in Fashion' was a great success in Japan, attracting 112,000 visitors in forty-eight days. The KCI printed 27,000 catalogues of this exhibition, as well as 5,000 copies in English and 3,000 in French. As a result, a very favourable balance between revenue and expenditure was achieved, the exhibition budget having amounted to 170,000,000 yen (approx. \$1.3 million).

In a costume exhibition, clothes are of course the most important element. However, the curators of the KCI attempt not only to appreciate costumes as fine art but also to reproduce the styling of the age. One can better understand fashion culture by studying the accumulated tastes of the period. For this reason, the mannequins in the 'Revolution in Fashion' exhibition were dressed with authentic accessories such as hats, shoes, bags and trimmings (lace embroidery, etc.). Typical hairstyles of the time were also reproduced. We attempted to create as faithfully as possible a manner of dress in which the costumes and sensitivities of the people were completely different from those of Japan and were from a period that is distant from the present. The Curators, Akiko Fukai and Jun I Kanai, received the prestigious Mainichi Fashion Grand Prix 1989 Special Award for their work.

In late 1989, 'Revolution in Fashion' was exhibited by the Fashion Institute of Technology of New York, under the title 'Ancien Régime'. In its art criticism column, *The New York Times* commented: 'Clothes may make the man or the woman, but they can also make history tantalizingly real, telling tales of the social, economic and political milieus that produced them.' In 1991, this exhibition went to the Musée des Arts de la Mode, Paris, under the title 'Elégance et Modes en France au XVIIIe Siècle'. Many French periodicals and newspapers, such as *Le Monde* and *Libération*, commented favourably on it in their art criticism columns.

The KCI, whose activities have stimulated the Japanese public's great interest in fashion exhibitions, is now planning an exhibition for 1994 on the theme of 'Japanese Influence in Fashion'. We have already seen, all over the world, many impressive exhibitions on Japanese influence in various disciplines; none, however, has yet shed light on the field of fashion. In spite of the vastness of the theme, the KCI hopes to be able to reveal, through clothes, another aspect of the Japanese spirit. ■

Identifying national costumes: searching for clues in words and images

Nina Gockerell

The many types of national costume worn over the past two centuries in Europe have found their way into a number of museums. Identifying and describing them accurately poses problems that only the most careful research can resolve. Nina Gockerell, Curator in the Ethnographic Department of the Bavarian National Museum in Munich (Germany), defines the various written and pictorial sources of information used by the museum to document its collection.

The broad field of national costume, that is, of rustic clothing, can be divided into four groups which can be studied by reference to various sources of information. Most of the examples surviving in museums are costumes for feast-days or other festive occasions. The second group consists of costumes denoting age, sex and social standing. Thirdly, there is occupational dress typical of various trades and professions. Finally, we find regional costumes deriving from the traditions of local communities.

Most of the original costume pieces now found in the often extensive collections and depots of museums for folk art or general history have come there more or less by chance. At the beginning of this century our museums, like those in other European countries, concentrated almost exclusively on collecting the picturesque festive costumes and their highly decorative accessories. Workday dress and underclothing were hardly ever acquired for museums.

Over the past decades several collections have been enlarged by purchases or presentations of considerably varied scope. These acquisitions were in general unsystematic, however, and took no account of the existing stock – a fact which seems to apply to a good proportion of the important collections. Written documents on the costume pieces are generally few and far between. Rarely do we possess exact records from the former owner, with precise information concerning date and place of production, textile manufacturer and seamstress, or the occasions on which specific garments were worn. A further complication lies in the fact that a large number of costume articles came into the museums as single pieces. Only with difficulty can their original connection with other pieces now be reconstructed. The

question of dates is somewhat easier to solve, as the materials themselves and sometimes ornamental additions such as lace or buttons permit a relatively exact definition of period.

From the above remarks it is obvious that we have to turn to other reasonably reliable sources for information regarding cut, materials, ornamental accessories and local peculiarities of costume. We have at our disposal a whole sheaf of clues which, taken one by one, tell us little of use, but considered together and correctly interpreted, can help to build up a fairly accurate picture of characteristic costumes in certain localities.

In the case of southern Germany – and this applies particularly to other Catholic regions – there are ten possible sources to be tapped:

1. Inventories of bequeathed property. Recourse to this type of source demands laborious investigations in archives. In Germany, there is the added handicap of the Gothic script which was in use up to the early years of the twentieth century. Its legibility varies greatly from one writer to another. The search for precisely dated and localized inventories, which are kept in the so-called Letter Registries, is also very time-consuming and rarely rewarded by sensational discoveries. But if we do come across a meticulous inventory, we can be fairly sure of information on a number of points.

In the first place, we find the local or dialect names for the garments belonging to the deceased. This raises the problem of 'translation' of specifically local terms, although in most cases it is not too difficult to gain a concrete idea of the article described. Furthermore we learn something of the colouring, as garments are always unmis-



Crib figures in Tyrolese costume, late eighteenth century.

takably distinguished from one another by an epithet such as 'blue skirt', 'red bodice', or 'black silk apron'. This leads to a further point of information in the inventories: the material, which is also precisely indicated as an aid to correct identification, for example a 'woollen vest', or a 'calico kerchief'.

Inventories of bequeathed property thus tell us something about the materials of which the various garments were made and about their colouring. In addition they are a mine of information concerning the dialect names of certain costume pieces in rural districts.

2. Police proclamations. From the sixteenth century on, official regulations waged a battle against finery. These regulations served to protect the local textile industry by forbidding the purchase of expensive imported materials by humbler citizens and peasants. Their chief purpose was actually to uphold the social distinction expressed by clothing. At the same time

they were intended to remind wearers of their background and to warn them against the vice of extravagance.

Accordingly, police proclamations of this sort provide valuable information as to what was *not* permitted to be worn in the country and in country towns. A prohibition is, however, always a sure sign that the thing prohibited was at first in general and widespread use. The fact that such prohibitions had to be repeated again and again indicates that little heed was paid to the regulations, and that at least in times of economic prosperity common citizens and peasants indulged in 'luxury' in the matter of clothing. The materials considered as such are cited in the regulations.

3. Sepulchral monuments and epitaphs. These usually portray the family of the deceased praying, with rows of sons and daughters strictly segregated according to age. The persons displayed in this manner confront us in the festive attire which they

would have worn to church. In most cases only the outlines are recognizable – but these are often very exact. This type of source reveals a good deal about the middle classes, less about the peasants.

4. *Votive paintings and memorial tablets.* Votive paintings (offerings made at a place of pilgrimage in intercession or thanksgiving) are becoming an increasingly important source for research on the costumes of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in Catholic regions. On the one hand, a tolerable likeness is aimed at – the person represented wishes to be able to identify herself or himself and to be recognized by others. On the other hand, we must make allowances for a certain conventionality, owing to the lack of formal training which is typical of the painters of such pictures. This also applies to memorial tablets, which are requests for prayers for the soul of a person who has suffered a sudden death. In votive paintings and memorial tablets we can identify the general forms of the clothing, the head covering and, in particular, the colours of the various garments. Votive paintings nearly always include the formula 'Ex voto' together with the date. In cases where this is lacking, it is relatively easy to date them by comparison with similar examples, which exist in great quantity.

In most cases it is possible to localize votive paintings by identification of the devotional image displayed in them. We can take it for granted that the pilgrims came from within the distance of a single day's journey on foot and this enables us to localize the costumes illustrated. The only problem in this respect concerns the great shrines such as Altötting in Bavaria or Mariazell in Austria, which were frequented by pilgrims from all over the country and even from abroad. In these examples the evaluation of the costumes naturally demands special caution.

As we have seen, votive paintings give an idea, even if only a general one, of the pattern of the clothes. Head coverings in particular are sharply characterized. Most important, we can establish the colours of the various garments, as these are illustrated accurately. This applies especially to festive apparel, since most votive paintings show the donors in an attitude of prayer and dressed in their Sunday church attire. Only in exceptional cases – for instance when an accident is portrayed – do these paintings give us an idea of everyday working attire. Workday dress is more often illustrated in the memorial tablets, the 'Marterln', which always depict accidents and sudden misfortunes. Here we are most likely to come across illustrations of the clothing of woodcutters, raftmen or shepherds. When evaluating pictorial



© Bavarian National Museum, Munich

Young girl in Munich costume. Signed and dated: 'J. (Joseph Anton) Rbomberg 1828.'



Lithography by Felix Joseph Lipowsky, showing a kermis dance in Tegernsee, Upper Bavaria, c. 1825.

sources from the field of folk art, allowance must always be made for the naïvety of the painters. None the less, if votive paintings and 'Marterln' are examined with the necessary caution, they have every right to be considered satisfactory sources of information.

5. Drawings and water-colour paintings by artists. In the first decades of the nineteenth century, it was usual for artists from Munich, Vienna and other cities to spend the summer months in the country. A general interest in country life began to develop, and this Romantic trend fostered the rediscovery not only of picturesque customs but also of rural costume. From the years between 1820 and 1860 we have countless water-colour paintings, drawings and coloured prints of peasants in the specific costume of their native surroundings. Whole series exhibiting 'national costumes' were executed – often sponsored by royalty. These are remarkable for the absolute reliability of the descriptions and

illustrations. Care must be taken, on the other hand, with the works of certain artists who gave free rein to artistic licence and did not hesitate to assemble from their sketchbooks scenes taken out of their proper local context.

6. Geographical and travel descriptions. The same period, around 1800, brought a profusion of travellers' observations on Bavaria, Austria and Upper Italy which, following earlier descriptions of the country, proved to be a useful literary complement to the sketches and paintings. Here we often find accurate descriptions of the costumes, but again attention is focused almost entirely on festive apparel, the occasions for such descriptions being weddings, fairs and other rustic festivities at which the traveller happened to be present. In the purely statistical country inventories, on the contrary, single articles of customary attire are noted, and occasionally there is even mention of items of working attire.

7. Peasant portraits. Now and then we find nineteenth-century portraits, mostly in more prosperous districts, of peasant couples who had themselves painted in Sunday attire, adorned with all their jewellery. These portraits are absolutely reliable records. They are however only rarely signed and dated, and it is most exceptional to find any mention of the names of the persons portrayed.

8. Representations of saints in national costume. We should also mention the pictures of certain saints who had been domestic servants, such as St Notburga, St Isidore and Blessed Henry of Bozen, and were represented according to their legend or as patron saints of servants in peasant clothing. Such representations often illustrate the costume of the time and place where they were made, and under certain conditions are thus – whether as

sculpture, painting or graphic art—a source for costume research.

9. *Crib figures*. From the early eighteenth century there exist church cribs with three-dimensional carved figures, mostly about 25 to 30 cm high and often clad in the costume of the local shepherds. Although this costume source is limited to a single social group, it has particular value on account of its general reliability. This comes from the underlying idea that the people could identify themselves with the crib, and through it, with the events of Christmas. For this reason careful attention was paid to the reproduction of the local costume worn by the shepherds in adoration. The same applies to the two-dimensional paper cribs.

10. *Costume dolls*. A few examples of costume dolls from the past century have survived. These have not the slightest connection with the souvenir dolls of the present day, but are exact copies illustrating prevailing costumes. Interchangeable items of clothing are often extant, such as head-dress for workdays and for feast-days. Dolls dressed as brides are extremely rare and are a particularly valuable source of information for costume research.

In a given region, if we succeed in applying three or four of these ten research possibilities we may be reasonably sure of gaining a reliable overall picture, which simplifies the matter of defining and dating single articles in museums. ■

When art became fashion: Japanese *kosode* exhibited at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art

The largest and most comprehensive exhibition ever assembled of Japanese *kosode* – the predecessor of the modern kimono – went on view at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art from 15 November 1992 to 7 February 1993. Entitled ‘When Art Became Fashion: *Kosode* in Edo-Period Japan’, the exhibition featured more than 200 works, including *obi*, genre paintings, woodblock-printed pattern books, and 146 examples of *kosode*, representing the flowering of the textile arts of Japan. The exhibition surveyed the social and aesthetic role played by dress in the Edo (Tokugawa) Period (1615–1868) when a dynamic urban culture flourished on a scale previously unknown in Japan.

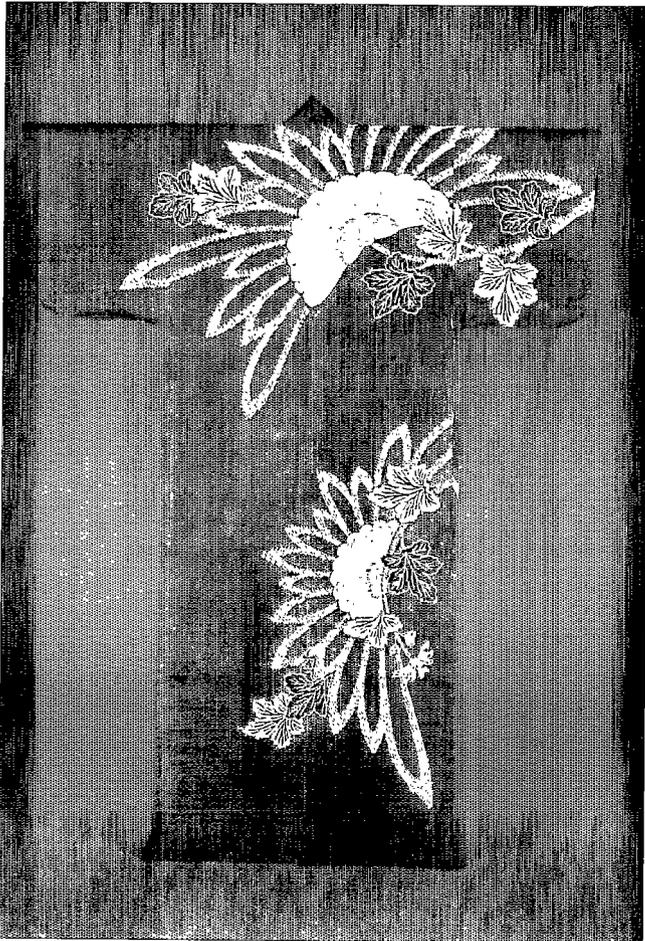
On loan from eighteen Japanese and four American collections, many of the garments had never been exhibited in the United States and several left Japan for the first time. Included in the exhibition were a *kosode* and four *obi* designated by the Japanese Government as Important Cultural Properties. Organized by the museum in co-operation with the Tokyo National Museum and the National Museum of Japanese History, the exhibition was seen only in Los Angeles.

The *kosode* was the primary garment of both men and women in Edo-Period Japan. The earliest works in the exhibition date from the late sixteenth to the early seventeenth century and combine tie-dyeing, applied gold leaf, embroidery, and ink-painting to create designs of great delicacy and refinement. The exhibition continued chronologically with works from the third quarter of the seventeenth century when the back of the *kosode* came to be decorated with a single, unified design. The late seventeenth century saw the development of *yuzen* dyeing, a technique that permitted the direct application of dyes with a brush. The rapid mastery of the

painterly capabilities of this new technique produced outstanding examples of panoramic landscapes and city views creating a fusion of art and fashion unique in the history of dress. From the late eighteenth century to the end of the Edo Period, a more subtle colour palette and limited areas of patterning became the hallmark of a shift away from earlier flamboyance.

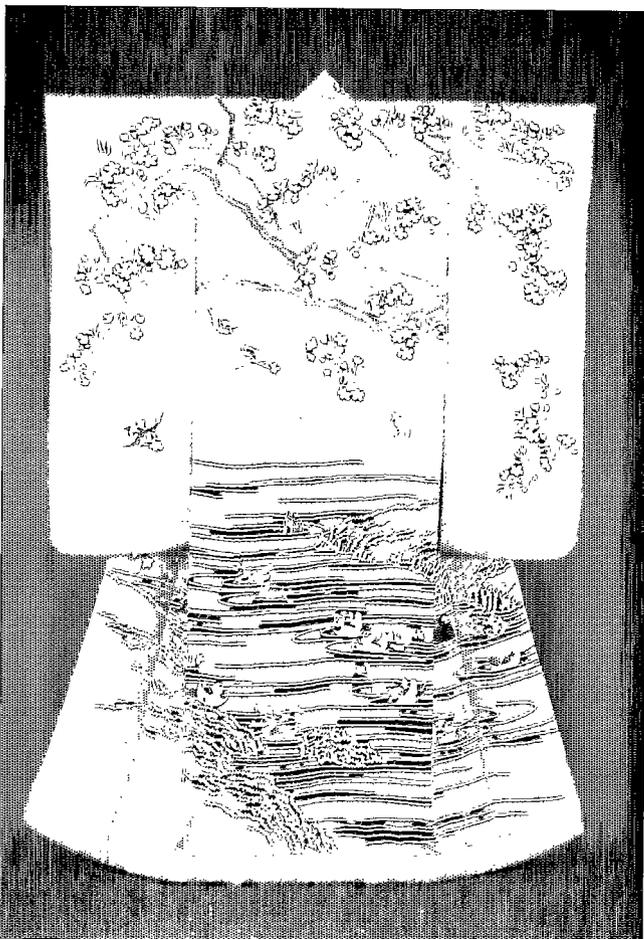
As the *kosode* evolved into a highly expressive means of personal display, it became a vehicle for the graphic representation of the world of its wearers. In the thematic section of the exhibition, *kosode* were arranged by type of imagery. Popular subjects included views of Kyoto and the capital Edo; auspicious motifs such as pine, bamboo, plum (symbolizing good fortune and longevity) and pairs of mandarin ducks (connoting conjugal bliss); ordinary objects such as boats, hats, and fans that became exciting design elements in the hands of Japan’s skilled craftworkers; visual puns that played off imagery against the complexities of spoken and written Japanese; and famous places in literature that were widely known through printed books. Other motifs, reserved by convention for the samurai class, recalled heroic tales and an often idealized court of the Heian Period (794–1185). Of particular interest were the *kosode* painted by artists including those created by such well-known painters as Gion Nankai (c. 1676–1751) and Sakai Hoitsu (1752–1811) whose signed paintings on *kosode* literally transformed art into fashion. ■

© Kyoto National Museum



Katabira with chrysanthemums, Japan, Edo Period (third quarter of the seventeenth century).

© Bunka Gakuen Costume Museum



Uchikake with cherry blossom, water, ducks and characters, Japan, Edo Period (first half of the nineteenth century).

A walk through Morocco: the Oudaïa Ethnographic Museum

Hoceïne El Kasri

Morocco's ethnic variety and its age-old history as a unique cultural crossroads is reflected in the rich costume collection of the Oudaïa Ethnographic Museum. Hoceïne El Kasri is Curator of the museum and author of a number of monographs on Moroccan traditional arts as well as a study on jewellery as a symbolic system.

The Oudaïa Ethnographic Museum in Rabat is housed in a small seventeenth-century palace which was restored in 1915 for the conservation and presentation of the national collections, and now portrays a wide range of the technical and artistic production of traditional life. The museum boasts one of the most harmonious textile art collections in Morocco. In it are conserved and exhibited costumes and accessories which range from the simplest everyday clothing to the most magnificent gold and silver brocaded caftans. It thus bears witness to the modes of dress which were habitual during the second half of the nineteenth century, and to the changes they have undergone in the twentieth century.

To draw attention to the importance of costumes as denoting religious, social, professional or other identity, or, quite simply, as constituting a symbolic system, is also to lay emphasis on their documentary value: they provide greater knowledge of human groups as well as of the reasons for changes taking place.

Morocco's privileged geographical position has resulted in continuous contacts with the civilizations which succeeded each other around the Mediterranean. As with every aspect of material life, the signs of this are fully evident in the country's costumes.

A rapid sketch of ancient history would mention Phoenicians, Carthaginians and Romans. Relations with the neighbouring Iberian Peninsula, were it Muslim Andalusia or Christian Spain, also formed part of the political and sociocultural interactions which have existed since the early Middle Ages. And if one takes into account language and religious links with the Middle East, this would complete the list of the principal factors which were responsible

for the originality shown by traditional Moroccan costumes. It is this originality that we try to portray through the collections in the Oudaïa Ethnographic Museum.

The collections can be presented in different ways, on condition that care is taken to display the variety which characterizes them. Various types of classification include gender, religious and technical categories, which could, of course, be further divided into subcategories, thus widening the scope for analysis. Such categories are not yet in formal use, however, so we shall keep to the classification adopted by the first ethnographers which establishes a distinction between urban and rural costumes. Although urban and rural characteristics intermingle, this classification will serve until such time as other methods are conclusively established.

Thus the ancient cities and towns, or *hadria*, such as Fès, Meknès, Tétouan, Rabat, Salé and Marrakech, are represented in the museum by the following women's costumes: *sebniya* (headscarf) and *izar*, *brouq* and *kenbouch* bridal veils; caftans specific to each town; brocaded *hzzām* and *dammā* belts embroidered with gold thread; *cherbil* shoes with uppers of embroidered velvet, and *ribiya* shoes made of black leather; costumes worn by Jewish women as illustrated by the famous grand ceremonial dress, the Keswa Lakkira costume.

With regard to rural costumes, we shall restrict ourselves to the major geographical regions and the ethnic groups of The Rif (in the north), the Atlas Mountains, the plains and the southern Sahara. Here, variety is the rule. None the less, the costumes are sufficiently coded for one to be able to identify, by this way of weaving a cloak or that way of arranging a hairstyle, the tribe or region to which they belong.

Taking the example of tribes from the Middle Atlas region, one can thus differentiate between the dress of the Zemmour woman and that of either the Zayàn or the Ait Serghouchen woman. Even if the women are wearing the same well-known *izar*, a Roman type of tunic the sides of which are pinned at the shoulders with silver fibulae, a Zemmour woman would tie it at the waist using a red woollen belt with long fringes, while a Zayàn woman would have around her a Handira cloak of white wool decorated with spangles. Then again, a Handira cloak can be the distinguishing sign of a tribe or group of tribes, as in the case of the blue and white striped cloak of the Ait Hdiddou in the High Atlas.

In rural areas, men usually wear a *rezza* (turban) or a large *chemrir* hat of plaited palm leaves, a long shirt under the famous jellaba which, in the case of the Rifians, is short and worn with a shoulder satchel of embroidered and perforated leather; and a *burnous* (High Atlas) or *akbnif* (Anti-Atlas) as outer garments. The costumes of the Saharan regions characteristically comprise the *izar*, the indigo-coloured *baïk*, the *derraca* and the *gandoura* which is decorated with large motifs in the form of volutes.

After this very rough sketch of the diverse ethnic and geographical elements which characterize traditional Moroccan costumes, we shall now take a quick look at them within the museum itself.

Organizing the collection

The seventeenth-century palace, built according to the canons of Islamic architecture, houses urban products (gold jewels, glazed ceramics) and the reconstituted salon with the brides from Fès and Rabat-Salé dressed in their finest costumes. The

rural arts exhibition is located in the heart of the Oudaïa gardens, and has displays which give pride of place to woven objects and costumes.

The exhibits represent a long ethnic itinerary which, starting from the foothills of the Middle Atlas (70 km east of Rabat), passes through the Zemmour, Zayan and Ait Serghouchen tribes. An incursion into the Rif would afford a glimpse of both men's and women's costumes on display. The itinerary continues through the High Atlas (Ait Hdiddou), and, more to the south, winds its way through the country of the Ida or Nadif, in the Anti-Atlas, and through the Sous Plain (south of Marrakech) towards the confines of the Sahara. Down the centre of the room there are showcases displaying accessories such as woollen belts which are dyed with henna or using the batik method.

Of course, only a few dress samples can be taken from each of the major regions mentioned in the vast itinerary above. The Zemmour woman, for example, wears the *izar* as do all her sisters of the Atlas Mountains. It is a simple white cloth which is arranged in the exhibit in such a way as to give visitors a clearer idea of the elaborate way in which it is worn. The cloth is first folded at the bust, and then the two ends are brought round over the back and pinned to the part in front, at the shoulder. They are attached by means of a pair of silver fibulae characteristic of the region. The main distinguishing feature of this *izar* is the use of a woollen belt with woven geometric motifs. It is decorated with coins and hung with collections of shells and fringes which reach down to the thighs. It is wound several times around the middle, and is original to the point of having little mirrors dispersed about it which make it glitter in sunlight.

Among the Ait Serghouchen, the *izar* is in lightweight muslin of urban origin and is



© Edisaud

Woman from the Ait Morrbad tribe.

...tied at the waist by a red and black belt made of coarse woven wool. The Ait Serghouchen women are distinguished above all by their head-gear and jewellery. The entire face is framed by a wig made of black wool. The jewellery, frontal and pectoral pieces and a pair of fibulae form

an array of silver plaques linked by small chains and decorated with geometric niello motifs peculiar to the tribe.

Mention should also be made of the *akbnif* of the Ait Ouazouguit (Anti-Atlas), similar to the *burnous* (cloak) of the High Atlas. Akin to a work of art, it occupies the entire showcase, its sides outstretched like a great colourful bird. The black wool and goat hair are woven in one piece and embellished by a large oval band, red and orange in colour, which is decorated with geometric motifs. Worn by Muslims and Jews, it was more widespread in the past when it could be found among the Glaoua of the High Atlas and in the Sous Plain.

The Ida, or Nadif (south-west of the Sous), live at an altitude of 1,000 metres in the heart of the Anti-Atlas. Their *izar* is made entirely of wool, with close-set geometric motifs woven on its borders. Red embroidery is used for overall embellishment, matching the jewellery of silver inlaid with niello and square cabochon reflectors made of red glassware.

Other details to note are the *baik* (formal dress in the fine wool of the Ighrem), and the large triangular fibulae which cover the upper part of the black cotton *izar* worn by the female singer from Tiznit, to name but a few. The dancer from Goulmima with her skilful hand gestures could well be mistaken for a dancer from Asia were she not wearing the famous indigo *baik*, which is peculiar to Saharan women.

The itinerary comes to a close with an enormous linen *gandoura*, dyed indigo, the pocket decorated with volute motifs which can also be found on the painted leather of nomads as far as Mauritania and beyond. African influence is undeniable and it may be said that history has thereby completed the warp and woof of its fabric.

It was these same nomads who, starting from the seventh century, actively participated in the Islamization of Andalusia, so much so that reference is still made to a Hispano-Moresque style with respect to both material and spiritual culture.

Town and city style

A distinctly urban style is prevalent in the artistic activities of the ancient cities and towns of the Maghreb. It has left its mark on all the arts and crafts, and the architecture of the seventeenth-century palace of the Oudaïa Museum attests most eloquently to it. The palace was built inside the Moulay Rachid walls and has a three-room oratory in the entrance. Next, there is a colonnaded patio with a central basin of white marble. Two rectangular salons and two loggias are placed opposite each other and constitute the museum setting in which one can admire the gold jewels and earthenware of Fès. Attired in their magnificent ceremonial costumes, the brides from Fès and Rabat can also be admired in a salon which opens out on to the Oudaïa gardens (one of the capital's most charming green spaces).

It is as if town and city dwellers only allow themselves to be seen in their best light. Their universal distinguishing feature is the caftan. Diversity exists in the choice of fabrics and the arrangement of accessories and ornaments, depending on the town or city in question and even on the social group within a given town or city.

We shall end this article with the presentation of two particular town and city costumes, one from Fès and the other from Rabat.

The caftan worn by the bride from Fès is a long and magnificent dress which is closed in front, from top to bottom, by a trim of

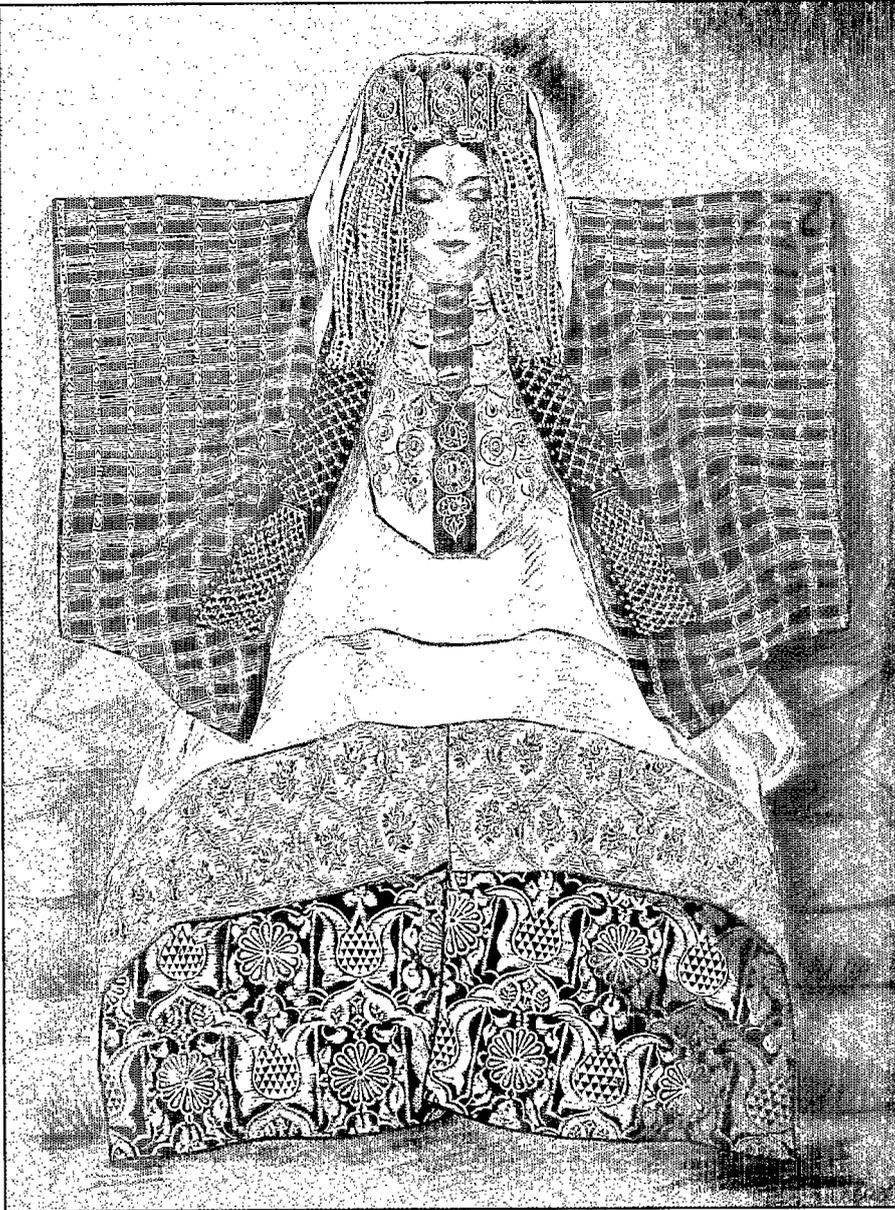


© Edisud

Jewish bride from Rabat.

small buttons. It is brocaded with gold thread and decorated with oval medallions spotted with red roses. Named 'Ben Cherif', after the family of weavers who have been making these caftans since the beginning of the nineteenth century, it is partly covered by the bridal veil of silk and gold brocade and the *lebba*, pectoral jewellery consisting of several rows of gilt and perforated silver plaques. The *lebba* is fixed to a flat wooden support which bears shining pearl necklaces interrupted in the middle by green spheres. A diadem, worn on the forehead and composed of rectangular plaques of gilt silver joined together by small hinges, helps to embellish the overall effect.

The accessories consist of a *hzam*, a broad brocaded belt over 2 metres long which is



Muslim bride from Fès.

wound several times around the waist, and a pair of *cherbil babouche* slippers which are made of leather and gold-embroidered velvet.

The bride from Rabat is seated on a high chair, the back of which has designs painted on the wood. She is dressed in a large caftan of violet velvet worked with gold braids. The caftan has short flared sleeves which are bias-cut from the waist, and is open in front, showing a *tabtiya*, a long undergarment of violet-coloured satin.

The place of the brocaded belt is taken by a broad *mdamma*, a belt of mauve velvet embroidered with gold thread. The sleeves are held in place by a *bmala* cord of braided silk. The *sebniya*, a bridal headscarf of white and orange striped silk, is

kept in place by a conical coif from which hangs the *nouacha*, scarlet-red and made of ostrich plumes. A *cherbil* slipper of violet velvet embroidered with gold thread completes the costume.

The above is a mere glimpse of the collection, a brief survey of the museum's exhibits. If it lacks precision in its presentation of the history of clothes in Morocco, the ways of wearing them and how they affect the body and gestures of the wearer, this is because its primary objective is simply to show their intrinsic value. ■

Note

Illustrations for this article are from the book *Costumes du Maroc* by Jean Besancenot, published by Edisud, R.N. 7, La Calade, 13090 Aix-en-Provence (France). A talented artist, Besancenot set about recording in 1934 the rich and various details of Moroccan garb; his rigour and exactitude have resulted in a work of both artistic and scientific worth. – Ed.

Bringing costumes to life: an exercise in media documentation

Aagot Noss

The Norsk Folkemuseum in Oslo initiated in the 1950s a plan for researching all Norwegian folk-dress with the aim of making a full survey of the costumes and their traditions. A programme of fieldwork was carried out over thirty years in those districts where such traditions were still alive. Aagot Noss, Senior Curator and Head of the Costume and Textile Department of the Folkemuseum, was responsible for setting up and supervising the programme. She describes how the use of personal interviews, photographs and film can make a museum collection come to life.

The programme of fieldwork adopted by the Norsk Folkemuseum began with visiting people in their homes, asking to see their clothes and interviewing the owners. This ensured that the clothes were catalogued according to type, fabric and adornment. A description of production as well as dressing procedures was accompanied by photographs of the objects and the various processes.

The data supplied by the interviewees was crucial, because it was very often the only way to obtain information with regard to who owns or owned the clothes, who made them, how they were made, how one put the pieces together in the proper

way and how one puts them on, who used them, and on which occasions they were worn.

The information collected formed the basis for filming the working process (such as the making of a folk-dress, the dyeing, cutting, sewing and embroidery techniques used, the weaving of edgings, borders and belts . . .) and the dressing procedure followed by unmarried girls, brides and married women (for example, the various ways of arranging hair and putting on head-dresses). The film thus becomes a useful and very often necessary supplement to still photographs and interviews. The film registers movements and details which cannot be obtained in any other way.

The interviewees who are asked to demonstrate a process are told to dress as usual for that type of work. They use their own clothes and their own implements, and do the work in their customary way. We never reconstruct a process or a situation, and we do not use museum artefacts. The film is a documentation of a tradition as it is caught now and as it was then. At times we have filmed the last remaining individual to know of a particular process. The camera operator must be a professional who knows how to take photographs showing what the hands are doing. Co-operation between the photographer and the interviewee should be close. It is also very important that the relationship between the museum professional and the demonstrator be a confidential one. Whenever possible, we ask the interviewee to explain what she is doing and this becomes a valuable part of the film commentary. The films are 16 mm and vary in length from 10 to 30 minutes. The films I have initiated focus on three themes: how to arrange hair and put on head-dresses; dress and textile handicraft working techniques; and rural

Photo by courtesy of the author



A Setesdal woman rinses the home-spun and handpleated fabric she has dyed. Photo taken in 1970 while filming for the Statens Filmsentral, Oslo.

Photo by courtesy
of the author

A bride and her dresser, mother and daughter. The bride wears a medieval-type head-dress belonging to her mother's family for several generations. Photo taken by Olav Kyrre Grepp while filming for the Statens Filmsentral, Oslo.



household work (for example, baking flatbread, dairy production).

Museums frequently have little, if any, information regarding their artefacts other than that which is available by examining the artefact itself. The film, by showing, for example, what belongs to a certain head-dress or a certain working process, and how the procedure took place, can be of great utility to the museum professional and also a means of informing and educating the public.

The Norske Kunst og Kulturhistoriske Museer (Organization of Norwegian Museums) has set up a committee for making documentary films about folk-culture which has received a yearly grant from

the Norwegian Government. The films can be rented at a reasonable price, or copies can be bought in the Statens Filmsentral, Oslo. The author has initiated a number of films produced by the committee as well as by the Norsk Folkemuseum. ■

Costumes as indicators of community

Marilina Perkkio

Although a relatively young institution, the Espoo City Museum in Finland has amassed an unusual collection of bridal wear. Marilina Perkkio, Director of the museum and Vice-Chairperson and Secretary of the ICOM Costume Committee, explains what such collections can reveal about the individual and society.

Museums are humanity's memory. A collection of dress and costume is perhaps one of the main assets of a historical museum, offering highly interesting source material for the study of culture and society. Dress and costume contain a great deal of information on society and its values, rituals, people, etc.

Costume acts like a language in passing information and messages between the individual and the group. Clothing is used to point out – both to oneself and to others – the role one wishes or sometimes is obliged to play. Individuals may also voice their protest by dressing unconventionally.

Clothes reinforce individuals' concepts of themselves, i.e. their identity. Identity contains the idea of belonging to a certain age-group, sex, social or professional group, religion, ideology, race, language group, nation and people. In all these groups, clothing is one of the means of creating and maintaining identity. People learn from early childhood to wear clothes belonging to different systems of values and symbols, which fosters a feeling of identification, reinforcing self-confidence. Society has the 'right' costume for all roles in the theatre of life. In international fashionable dress, national and historical traditions also have a prominent place.

Founded in 1958, the Espoo City Museum is still a young museum, and our collections, though locally and nationally significant, are small in comparison with many museums abroad. The museum's Costume Collection contains almost 5,000 catalogued items. The oldest individual pieces of clothing are from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Material from the mid-nineteenth century includes a bridegroom's coat, women's dresses, head-gear, underwear, and footwear. The 1870s and 1880s are represented by a few dozen

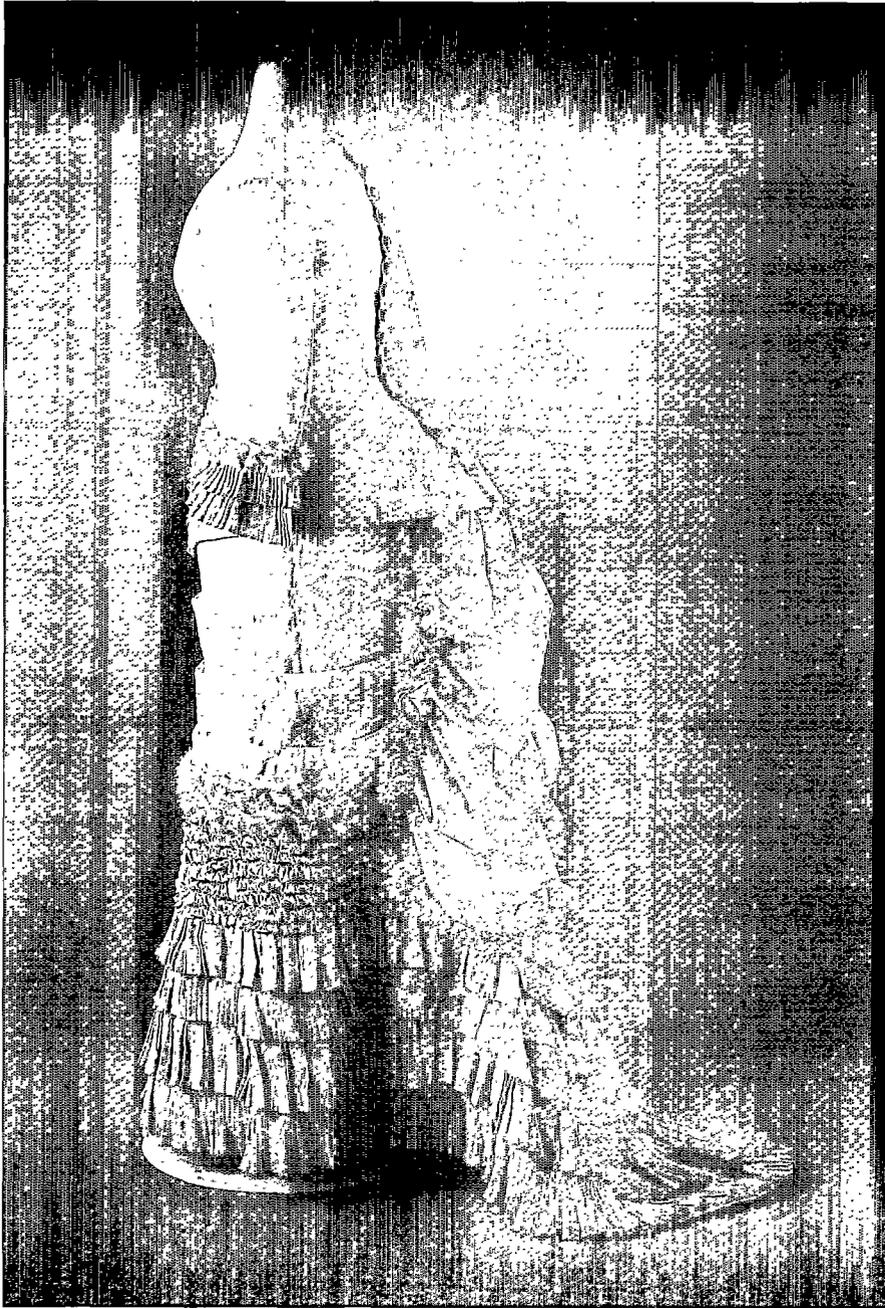
items of women's clothing, and a few examples of men's clothes. Most of the material is from the twentieth century, mainly from the 1920s to the 1980s.

Bridal costume and its story

Bridal costumes are an interesting part of our costume collection. At present, the Espoo City Museum has only a small assortment of bridal wear, but it covers a period from the 1850s to the 1980s. The museum's oldest bridal costume is an ivory silk/wool gown from 1883. There is also a bridal jacket of black silk from 1871, a bridal costume of ivory-coloured silk from 1900–1910, a white tulle costume from 1910, a white silk costume with a veil and a tiara of wax flowers from 1929, an ivory-coloured imitation silk gown from 1939, a bridal costume of light bluish imitation silk from 1942, and a light turquoise bridal gown of lace from 1953. Typical bridal wear of the 1960s is a dress of white material over which a hooded organza coat was worn (1966). The collection also includes a bridal costume from 1969, which was made of thick imitation silk and dyed green for later use. The informal and often modest style of the 1970s is represented by a white two-piece costume of wool from 1971.

Weddings are among the main festive occasions in society. Dress and ornament have always been essential and visible elements in creating their special character and mood. In weddings, they were also judicial and ceremonial instruments.

According to old Nordic laws and customs, weddings among the land-owning classes were first and foremost significant events of an economic nature, even with overtones of political power. A marriage was a contract in which economic considera-



Bridal costume from 1883; ivory-coloured silk/wool with cotton lining. Espoo City Museum/Muscokuva, 1991.

tions were important. It involved the whole family, and was treated as an economic transaction. The value and number of bridal gifts reflected the social and economic status of the family concerned.

The wedding was the turning-point of a woman's life, after which she became, in a sense, a different person: a wife, childbearer and a person with responsibilities. The carefree days of maidenhood were now in the past, and the role and duties of a wife awaited her.

As a bride, a woman was queen, though only for a day. On this most important day she dressed in her finest clothes, and the best fabrics, jewellery and ornaments available. Her wedding dress was a sign of her

wealth and social standing. With her wedding dress the bride acquired a new, impressive, and above all fashionable costume, which was later worn on formal and festive occasions after the wedding. A great deal of planning and work was required to keep the costume serviceable for later wear. It often happened, however, that old wedding costumes were considerably altered to keep them fashionable.

In order to acquire the best and finest gown possible, the bride would try to have as her 'dresser' a wealthy woman of high social standing. Farmers' brides usually asked the wife of the local vicar to be their dresser, while servants turned to the mistress of their household. Similarly, tenants' brides would ask the lady of their manor to assist. At court, the queen was often given this honour. Upper-class women still dressed farmers' brides as late as the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In later times, vicars' wives and ladies of manors lent their old formal and festive costumes to farmers' brides. Burgher brides were usually dressed by the wife of a burgomaster or a local alderman.

Since the nineteenth century, elderly local women were almost professional dressers of brides in rural areas, renting the necessary attire and ornaments to them. The dressers were often the wives of clergymen or sextons.

The bride in white

During the Empire style of the early nineteenth century light-coloured (often white) festive dress of thin cotton, silk or muslin came into fashion. This derived from the interest in Antiquity common at that time. Since then white, or rather ivory-coloured, festive dress remained the bridal costume. The white bridal veil was also adopted

with this fashion. High-bodiced costumes of thin cotton with veils and myrtle wreaths emulated the idealized image of the goddesses of Antiquity.

From the early nineteenth century, white began to be associated with the purity and innocence of the bride. It is from this period that we have adopted the typical image of a bride in a white gown, with a myrtle wreath and orange blossom in her hair and veil. With minor variations, this idealized image can be followed down to the present day. Bridal costume, however, has always followed changes in fashion in both cut and colour.

Among burghers and farmers in the Nordic countries, black was the old colour of festive and bridal dress. Black remained the colour of bridal costumes until the 1890s, when the white gown and veil were gradually adopted by farmers' brides. At first, a light-coloured costume was worn with a white veil, but over the years the actual gown also came to be made of white material. A white gown, veil and bridal crown could only be worn by a bride who was still a virgin. Julia Gadolin of Espoo began to dress brides in white gowns with veils and myrtle wreaths as early as the 1870s. However, photographs of brides in Espoo still show black wedding gowns in the early 1900s, by which time white and coloured costumes had already become common. The dressers were active in spreading white bridal costumes.

In the late nineteenth century it gradually became customary to wear the bridal costume only at weddings. This was usually a white gown that could sometimes be dyed for later use. If it was worn only at the wedding it was carefully packed and stowed away after the event. In the early twentieth century class distinctions and differences

were levelled, and even farmers' brides dressed according to prevailing fashions.

The bridal costumes in the museum's collections and additional material from archives and libraries can tell this story and much more about this aspect of dress which in turn permits a deeper study of human life and society. ■

Costume preservation: where science and art meet

Isabel Alvarado

Protecting the clothes and accessories that make their way into museum collections presents a host of technical problems requiring careful study and methodical procedures. Isabel Alvarado shares the fruits of her experience as textile preserver and restorer at the Museo Histórico Nacional in Santiago (Chile), and author of several historical and technical articles.

Working with a costume collection opens the door to knowledge and understanding of the way of life of our forebears. One is constantly surprised at the techniques developed in periods which seem so remote, when the pace of life, the social structure and scientific development were vastly different from those of our own time.

Clothing is part of people's lives and communicates a range of valuable information. Irrespective of the period to which it belongs, it was made and designed as a utilitarian object, except in rare circumstances when it was produced as a symbolic object or used as a distinguishing device. Costumes were not intended to be works of art: in the course of time, with our penchant for collecting things which bear witness to times past, we have turned them into museum pieces, thus acknowledging their importance.

How should they be preserved?

This marks the beginning of a period of study, working methods, observation and diagnosis – in short, a coming together of history, technique, science and art – in order to present the costume to the museum-going public in a harmonious display which is at once instructive and pleasing to the eye.

Concern with the preservation of costumes and clothing accessories is a relatively recent phenomenon and as yet there is no overall agreement on which are the best methods: the last word has certainly not been said on this topic. It is generally agreed, however, that, if an object is to be properly preserved, the historical and technological characteristics of that object must be identified: we must know what materials it is made of and how it will react in relation to a number of factors, such as change of climate, exposure to light, con-

tact with other materials and handling. The factors causing deterioration, both those common to all textiles and those which affect costumes as three-dimensional objects, must be identified.

There are certain key points which are crucial in the life of a costume or accessory in a museum textile collection. During the various stages of reception, cataloguing, storage, display and handling we shall see that a number of factors can help enhance the life expectancy of the items at every stage.

The findings given below are the result of my experience as Textile Curator at the Museo Histórico Nacional of Santiago (Chile), and of my reading of specialized books on the subject.

First steps

When a textile item enters the museum it is kept separate from the collection until it has been inspected for infestation or fungi. In either case the appropriate procedure is to clean the item, either using a brush or by vacuuming it gently, protecting the material with a mesh. If the active presence of larvae or mildew is detected, the textiles are sent to a specialized company. To carry out the insect control procedure oneself entails a health risk and a risk for the item concerned, as it may suffer secondary effects.

When the object is clean and free from infestation, it is stored in a separate cabinet with mothballs as a preventive measure until the cataloguing procedure begins.

During this stage, the maximum amount of information possible should be recorded and the items photographed in order to facilitate future access to information without subjecting items to unnecessary han-

dling. This work should be carried out with the utmost care: the operator's hands should be clean and the article should be laid out on a clean surface free from any product which may stain it.

A length of cotton tape on which the inventory number of the item has been written may be sewn on to the textile in a predetermined, easily accessible place. Nothing should ever be written directly on the textile itself, nor should adhesive labels be used.

When items are transferred from one place to another, care should be taken to move them in a horizontal position on a flat surface which is larger than the objects themselves, thus allowing the weight to be evenly distributed.

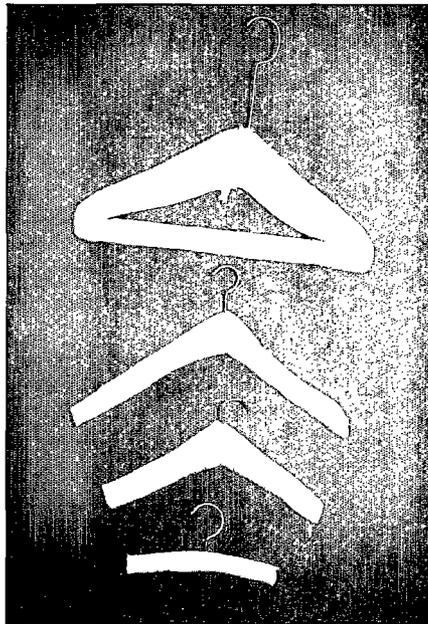
It is essential to have a clean, well-ventilated and properly organized space situated in a place which does not pose a threat to the collection.

Items of clothing are not made up of cloth alone. Many of them incorporate other materials, such as fur, feathers, leather, ivory, tortoise-shell, metal, etc. These require even more stringent supervision in their preventive preservation, as the different materials may react differently to atmospheric changes.

Control of the environment

Guidelines for Costume, an ICOM Costume Committee publication, recommends that atmospheric conditions should fluctuate as little as possible. A temperature of 18 °C and relative humidity of 50 to 55 per cent are considered ideal.

Fabric alters in response to changes in humidity, expanding when humidity is



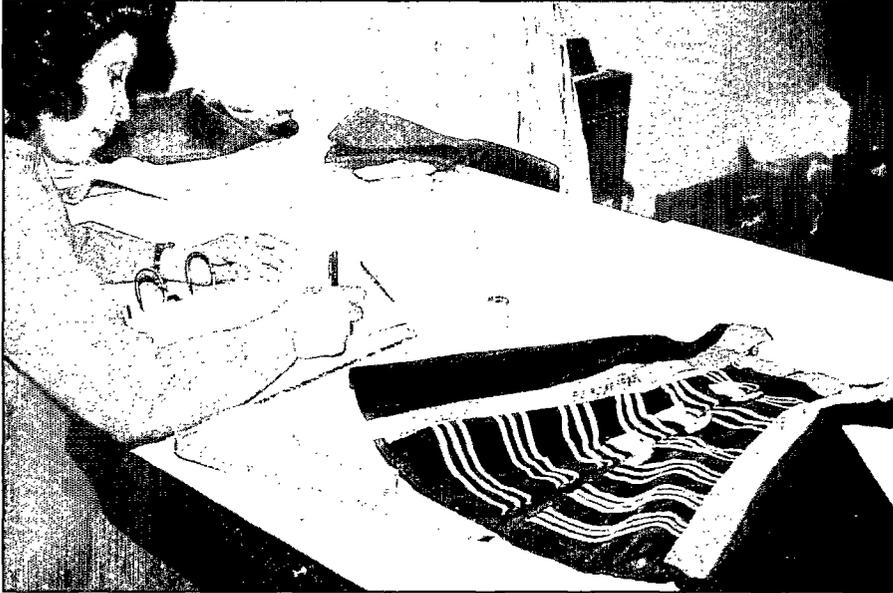
© Textile Department, Museo Histórico Nacional, Santiago (Chile)

Hangers should be padded and the correct size should be used to prevent stress at the shoulder.

high and contracting when it is low. This leads to fabric fatigue due to a loss of elasticity. Relative humidity of 70 per cent promotes the growth of micro-organisms, particularly in conjunction with other factors, such as high temperatures, darkness and poor ventilation. These micro-organisms flourish rapidly, attacking fibres and dyes. Damage thus caused is irreversible. When humidity falls below 40 per cent, fabrics dry out and the fibres become weak and brittle.

Absolute temperature levels are less important than temperature fluctuations, because the risk of damage is due to abrupt changes in temperature. Lights are normally turned on only when work is being carried out in the storeroom, which is kept in darkness the rest of the time.

Dust is another factor which contributes to the deterioration of objects, as a layer of dust on fabric attracts damp. As well as promoting the proliferation of insects, dust is also abrasive, penetrating into the fibres



Full documentation on each item is essential to ensure that the costume collection is properly managed and accessible.

and eating them away. The most important preventive measure in the fight against dust and pollution is to clean regularly and to keep both the surroundings and the items clean, as this also prevents insects from becoming established.

We are well aware of the preventive measures needed for the preservation of textiles; however, owing to lack of space and limited resources, the museum stores are situated in a basement which has no dust or pollution filters. This means that it is essential to carry out periodic inspections in order to detect any changes in relative humidity or the presence of infestation as soon as possible. When humidity rises we resort to the dehumidifier, and to prevent attack by moths, which is the most common problem, we use mothballs hung in little cloth bags placed inside boxes and wardrobes. Objects are never left exposed to dust and pollution.

Storage methods

During storage, the materials that will come into contact with the costumes are of primary importance for their preservation.

Costumes should not come into direct contact with: wood or paper, which may transmit their own acidity to the fabrics; sized fabric, which may transmit the products used in the finishing process; metals, which rust in damp conditions and corrode and stain fabrics; polythene, which inhibits ventilation, attracts dust and traps any moisture which may be present in the costume, thus providing ideal conditions for the proliferation of micro-organisms.

Suitable materials are: buffered, acid-free paper and cardboard; wood with a formica or melamine veneer or treated with epoxy resin; unsized, unbleached cotton fabric; metal (in places where humidity is low, metal cabinets or trays may be used).

The following storage systems are used at the Museo Histórico Nacional:

Vertical storage

Costumes which are well preserved are hung on padded hangers filled with polyester fibrefill and covered with cotton fabric. This ensures that the weight of the fabric is spread over a wider area. Costumes cut on the bias or made of woven fabric may not be hung, as they are liable to lose their shape. Other costumes which should not be hung are those with heavy decoration which causes stress, dresses with very fine shoulder straps or strapless dresses. All costumes should have ample space when hung.

Horizontal storage

The safest method of storing fragile costumes and those which cannot be hung for any of the reasons given above is to store such costumes and accessories horizontally in drawers or boxes.

Storage drawers and boxes are lined inside with unbleached cotton or buffered, acid-free paper. Ideally, costumes should not be folded, but when this is unavoidable, it is advisable to line folds and pleats with rolls of paper. Sleeves may also be stuffed to prevent creasing which causes fibres in the fabric to tear. A practical, low-cost solution for the storage of small items such as accessories and shoes is shoe boxes, which do not take up much room and can be stacked. The inside of the box is lined with acid-free paper. Hats and shoes stored in boxes should be stuffed to keep their shape.

The storage of fans, parasols and umbrellas presents a variety of problems. Opinions are divided as to the best method of providing total support during storage in order to reduce stress. Should fans be stored open, half-closed or closed? Should umbrellas and parasols be hung, or stored horizontally?

We keep our fans closed in boxes, but perhaps a better solution would be to store them half-opened on a padded surface with an indentation to accommodate the part where the spines of the fan protrude. Of course, this requires more space. We keep umbrellas and parasols in boxes lined with acid-free paper, but this means that the weight is concentrated on one area, which, in the long term, may affect the fabric.

Rolled storage

Flat items of clothing such as shawls, mufflers, scarves, etc. may be stored rolled around a cardboard tube lined with acid-free paper, with the right side uppermost. They are then wrapped in cloth or paper as indicated above and the ends are tied with cotton tape which should not come into contact with the fabric. The identification

number is sewn on to the tape, thus avoiding unnecessary handling.

The museum has a special cabinet for the storage of large tubes with a spindle which fits through the tubes and is attached to both sides of the cabinet by means of wooden pegs. There are various design solutions for the storage of rolled textiles.

Preservation while on display

During exhibitions, costume preservation may be affected by the following factors: exposure to light, humidity and variations in temperature, dust and pollution, materials with which the costume comes into contact, stress due to inadequate support and handling while the display is being mounted.

Light

Textiles are among the materials most sensitive to light. The degree of deterioration depends on the nature and intensity of the light, the characteristics of the fibres and dyes and the degree of humidity in the atmosphere. Light-induced damage to fabric means in practice that the fibres lose their resistance and flexibility and/or dyes fade: this occurs over a period of time and is not easily spotted.

In order to prevent such damage, lighting should be soft and even: 50 lux is considered ideal. Exposure to direct sunlight should be avoided by shading the windows with curtains or ultraviolet filters. Ultraviolet filters, either in the glass of the showcases themselves or in front of the light source, are also recommended for use with artificial lighting. Ultraviolet rays are the most damaging. If filters cannot be installed, then lighting intensity should be reduced as well as the duration of exposure to light. Light

sources should be situated outside show-cases, as the heat that they produce dries out and fades fabrics, particularly in the areas closest to the light source.

Humidity and temperature

These factors should be monitored during the exhibition just as they are during storage. Display stands should be placed at a distance from entrances where humidity and temperature are constantly fluctuating.

Dust and pollution

Dust is the great enemy of fabrics, especially in highly polluted areas. Unfortunately, this is true of the Museo Histórico Nacional, which is situated in the centre of Santiago, a highly polluted city. Although the building is old, it is in good condition, but it has many windows, making pollution control difficult, as to seal off the building and install air conditioning would require an investment that the museum cannot afford.

As we are aware of the damage caused by dust and pollution, items are inspected and cleaned periodically in order to minimize this problem. Furthermore, costumes and accessories are displayed in showcases for a limited period only, and both showcases and costumes are kept clean. When open exhibitions are held it is sometimes necessary to clean the costumes while they are on display: this is done without dismantling the display and using the same method described above. The exhibition hall should be cleaned without raising dust.

Handling

Handling of any kind is potentially dangerous for old costumes. The utmost care

should therefore be taken when dressing and undressing a display dummy, as this creates stress and tension. The operator's hands should be clean and no rings or bracelets should be worn. The use of pins or other devices which may exert tension over small areas and tear fibres should be avoided. When costumes are on display they should be thoroughly supported so as to distribute the weight evenly. This may be achieved by using a suitable dummy, stuffing with polyester fibrefill where necessary and supporting it with a T-shirt, and using suitable frames and underclothing. This will also help to reproduce the appropriate silhouette for the period to which each costume belongs.

Starting from the assumption that no item should be on permanent display, at the museum we have been particularly concerned that textiles and costumes should not remain on view for more than three months in a showcase or for more than one month in open exhibitions. Costumes are more exposed in open displays, particularly if the exhibition hall is not air-conditioned. They are also within reach of visitors and the proximity of the items on display causes security problems: some method of isolating the costumes should be found.

Undoubtedly the ideal solution would be to display costumes and accessories in showcases which comply with certain preservation criteria. ■

Note

Space does not permit publication of the detailed bibliography provided by the author, which may be obtained from *Museum International* upon request. – Ed.

A computerized interactive catalogue

Marie H el ene Poix

Putting together an 'encyclopedia of fashion' using the latest computer technology was the challenge facing the French Union of Costume Arts. Marie H el ene Poix, documentalist in charge of data processing, describes this new development which has rapidly become an indispensable museum tool.

In 1948, professionals of various clothing industries set up the Union Fran aise des Arts du Costume (French Union of Costume Arts, UFAC) which currently boasts nearly 10,000 costumes, 32,000 items and accessories dating from the eighteenth century to the present day. Its activities are to identify, preserve, study and enrich the collections in order to publicize and promote them and display them to advantage.

In 1986, UFAC undertook to compile a computerized interactive catalogue of its collections of the original costumes, accessories and designs preserved in its store-rooms. The mere fact of putting its total collection on to a single optical medium was tantamount to a revolution in the museum world and was made possible by support from the Committee for the Promotion and Development of Textiles and Clothing (DEFI).

Besides the UFAC documentation centre's large library (1,000 volumes on the history of costume and fashion, periodicals, photographs, original designs and engravings) its collections are now open to automated consultation by means of the Laservision videodisc. This videodisc is nothing short of an encyclopedia of fashion, and, together with its data bank, received the accolade of 'best image bank application' in Besan on in 1987 at the International Salon of the Interactive Image. Owing to its large storage capacity (54,000 images on each side), its high-speed access and its excellent level of interactivity when linked up to a microcomputer, the videodisc very quickly became a must. In conjunction with the database, it meets a real need on the part of the UFAC curators, because the collections are fragile, need delicate handling and are stored in a variety of places. The videodisc makes it possible to take full stock of them so that they can become better known, better managed and set off

to advantage while at the same time they are lastingly preserved.

Naturally, this device also meets the professional needs of designers, stylists, conservation specialists, costumiers, journalists, historians, etc. because it is a remarkable working tool that provides a wide choice of pictures and information.

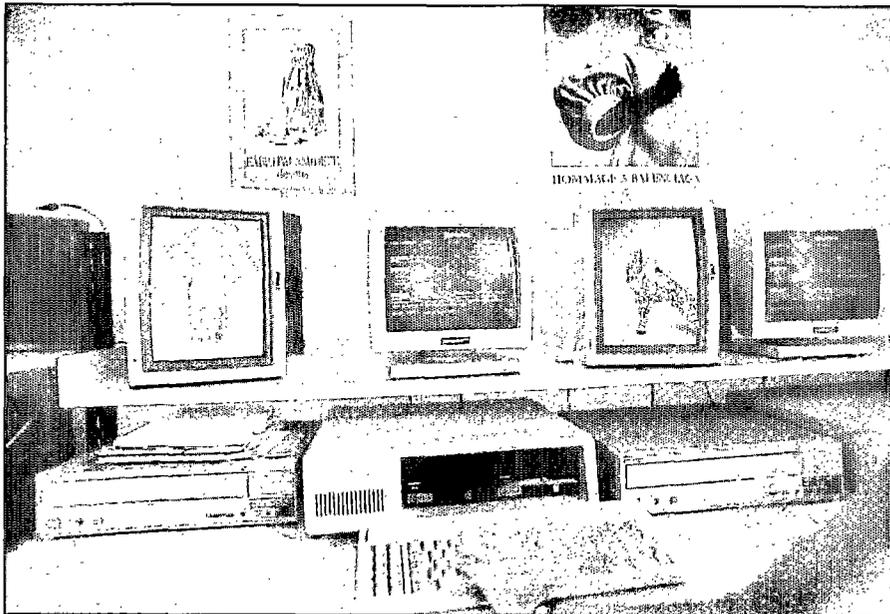
Teamwork

The computerization of twentieth-century collections, which began in 1986 as the first phase of the project, was completed in 1987. Several teams of documentalists, assistant curators, photographers and restorers were needed to produce this first videodisc.

The descriptions were drafted in ordinary language (without reference to a thesaurus). Of course, an index of terms specific to each particular field had to be drawn up to avoid synonyms, analogies and too much 'noise' and to monitor the terms selected in certain fields: for example, the use of generic terms to make different levels of interrogation possible, and the use of codes.

Such importance is attached to the descriptive record because words lead to pictures. Each term of the documentary record is considered to be a keyword and can therefore be interrogated. Everything is therefore a selection criterion: year, fashion designer's name, material, colour, bibliography and so forth. These data may be cross-checked in order to obtain a more precise answer. Proximity operators permit interrogation within the whole text (for example, if I want to see all the bow ties, I will interrogate 'tie adj. bow').

The costumes have been set in their periods and are displayed on dummies, which



The videodisc consultation centre.

means that proportions had to be respected in terms of the period, research on volume, etc. The photographer concentrated on details (print, buttons, embroidery, cut, etc.) significant of an era or characteristic of the designer's work.

The data concerning the 24,000 documentary records or data sheets covering the three categories of documents to be processed (costumes, accessories, original designs) were entered on-site by operators and then loaded into the FASHION base. A table then had to be drawn up showing the correspondence between the serial numbers of the slides (recorded on the description sheets) and the videodisc numbers assigned to these slides when the data were entered.

The second phase of the project, the computerization of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century collections, i.e. 5,000 documents and 15,000 pictures recorded on a second videodisc, was completed in 1988/1989.

The experiment with the first videodisc led to some changes to the descriptive record. Certain fields were dropped (the field *STYLE*, which gave only a vague and unduly arbitrary idea of a period) in favour of others (the field *ORNAMENT* was added and supplemented, while being distinct from the field *MOTIFS*, for example).

A few figures convey a better idea of the scope of the undertaking: the estimated cost of the operation for twentieth-century costumes, including hardware, software, photographic inventory, staff, restoration and the consultancy firm is 3.2 million

francs (approx. \$600,000). UFAC now has a database of 29,000 descriptive notes referring to a bank of 48,000 pictures.

The videodisc consultation centre operates as a local network, that is, a multi-station central microcomputer or server equipped with a standard BRS documentary software package interrogated by four 'visual' terminals, i.e. three ordinary personal microcomputers, each equipped with two monitors (text and pictures), and a documentary video viewer or 'multiple graphic display terminal' which, in addition to the textual selection available on the ordinary terminals, also provides a visual selection.

This rapid picture retrieval and selection tool can be used to produce slide packages on specific themes. Sixteen small pictures can be viewed simultaneously on the multiple picture screen and many more (up to 2,000) retrieved by scrolling.

These little pictures may be organized under headings in the form of stacks or chapters on the hard disc and may be used again later on. The content of the stacks or chapters may be reviewed flat or in carousel form.

The assistance that this provides to museum staff is without parallel. When preparing an exhibition, the staff hire a 'picture maker', or a documentary video terminal, in order to search for and select documents. In this way they have access to the collections without having to enter the storerooms to make this initial selection. It is also possible to ascertain just how bulky the costumes are (which could not previ-



Cocktail dress designed by Cristobal Balenciaga in 1955.

ously be done in storeroom hanging wardrobes and drawers).

So no time is wasted, and greater familiarity with the collections means that they are put to the best possible use.

Assessment and prospects

The time has come to make an assessment of the past five years. Technological progress has been very swift, and, as a result, the hardware purchased, although not obsolete since it is still in working order, is inadequate in terms of meeting all our needs.

Although the total number of documents or costume items entered into the picture bank is large, it represents only one tenth of all the accessories and one third of all the costumes! Not to mention the other major categories of documents such as items of lingerie, men's costumes, children's clothing and so on. Hence the large amount that will have to be processed in future, and this is the crucial factor that has prompted us to think about new archive systems. While

written data can be entered into the base as soon as it is received, this is not true of pictures. Since the Laservision videodisc can be neither effaced nor re-recorded, the updating procedure is cumbersome and expensive. We must therefore opt for inscribable media and try to find some way of choosing, while the great battle rages between digital and analog systems, an autonomous recording procedure that will enable us to have an exhaustive catalogue of our collections which can be consulted by the whole profession and by schools and museums, in France and abroad. ■

The restoration of a coronation dress: a case-study from the Kremlin Museum

Emma Chernukha

The author, Curator of the Kremlin Museum's collections of former state regalia and of Russian court dresses from the sixteenth to the twentieth century, describes how careful research and analysis resulted in the refurbishing of a spectacular eighteenth-century gown. Emma Chernukha has organized seventeen permanent exhibitions at Moscow's Kremlin Armoury and is the author of numerous publications and catalogues.

The Kremlin Museum, Moscow, houses a unique collection of garments dating as far back as the sixteenth century. Many items were made at the Kremlin workshops for the Tsars and their families, as, for example, the wardrobe of Peter I and that of his grandson, Peter II, which contains over 100 items. The unique ceremonial court dresses of Russian empresses are also represented.

The museum is particularly attentive to the conservation and restoration of these relics. The restoration of the coronation dress of Empress Elisabetha Petrovna (1742) is a case in point.

The dress was partially restored in 1940, but fraying, ageing and accumulated dirt made it necessary to call again on the aid of the restorers in 1980. After a thorough examination of the damage it was discovered that the threads (silver on a silk base) had not yet lost their original quality although varying degrees of deterioration could be noted on different parts of the dress. Superficial dirt consisting of dust, microscopic particles of soot and of siliceous substances were found, but there was no apparent evidence of grease spots and other organic damage. The darkening of the fabric was mainly due to silver tarnishing.

With this in mind, experts suggested the following restoration techniques: a vacuum cleaner to remove dirt not firmly encrusted in the fabric, which would then be treated with distilled water with no detergents; alcohol to be applied to the silver threads to remove tarnish; water and a neutral detergent to clean the skirt's silk lining; the use of a closely stitched net seam to repair the most threadbare parts of the dress; the insertion of a new lining of thin silk under the bodice.

In order to carry out the work the skirt was dismantled into separate gores. The combination of water and alcohol cleaning proved favourable and the slight amount of shrinkage which ensued restored the fabric to its original shape and size. The silver parts were refurbished to their former brightness and natural dyes were used for the threads making up the net seams. Lastly, the fabric was sized with a weak paste and pressed with a warm iron through protective fibreglass cloth. The gores were reassembled and the lining attached with silk threads which were sewn into the same holes as the original stitching.

The first stage of restoration – that of the fabric – was then complete. It remained to restore the original shape of the garment by constructing a hooped petticoat (farthingale). This entailed an elaborate research process.

The eighteenth-century ceremonial court dress is characterized by a particular silhouette which exaggerates the natural body line. A frame of willow branches, whalebone or thin metal plates (called *panier* in France) created this form which evolved from a dome-like shape in the 1720s and 1730s, through a softer oblong form in the 1740s and 1750s, to a gigantic ellipse-shaped construction in the 1770s and 1780s. The awkward, heavily welded iron constructions fixed on an ordinary tailor's dummy which had previously been used for exhibition purposes in the Kremlin Museum could only give an approximate rendering of these various shapes and, by distorting the true cut of the dress, provoked considerable fabric damage. It was therefore necessary to devise forms that corresponded more closely to those of the eighteenth century and that were more in keeping with sound museum preservation and conservation practice.

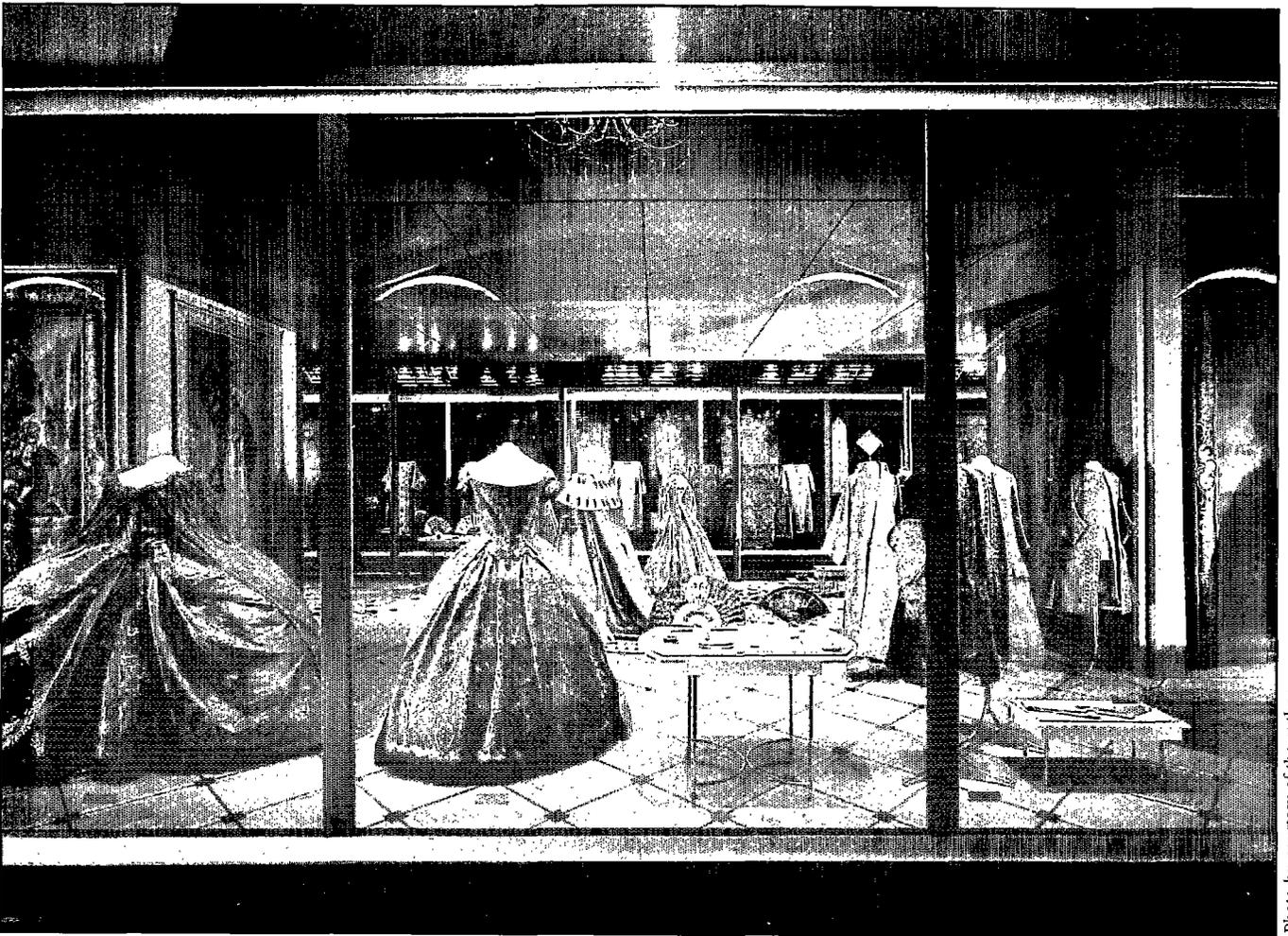


Photo by courtesy of the author

The absence of detailed drawings on this subject in the literature of historical costume made the task of re-creating the shape of the dress more difficult. Those drawings and construction patterns which could be found did not provide measurements and moreover were not typical of a 'Grand Costume' such as the coronation dress in question. It was thus necessary to analyse the museum's eighteenth-century ceremonial dresses which had been worn by other empresses on important occasions to determine their proportions and calculate such measurements as the ratio of skirt length to width, the distance from front to back, the circumference of the hoops, etc. On the basis of these calculations, precise measurements were established and the Bolshoi Theatre workshops prepared a frame of silk cloth and narrow metal hoops which served to reconstruct the shape of Elisabetha Petrovna's coronation dress. The restored fabric was then assembled on the form, special attention being paid to such details as pleats and lace trim. Finally a team of artists, sculptors, engineers and experts from Russia's Art Foundation worked together to create a special dummy for this eighteenth-century gown.

The procedure described above was followed for the restoration of other dresses of the period, in particular Catherine II's wedding and coronation dresses. ■

Restored eighteenth-century dresses at the Kremlin Museum.

The Textile Conservation Centre

Peter Rose

What do a seventeenth-century Spanish colonial suit and a 1960 high-fashion raincoat have in common? The explanation is provided by Peter Rose, a freelance writer specializing in the arts, who takes a look at a unique institution dedicated to all types of textile conservation.

The Mahatma's dhoti is about to receive its first wash in a long, long time . . . the initial step in a complicated process to remove some major staining before it goes on view as part of an exhibition at a local history museum in South Africa to mark the centenary of Gandhi's arrival in Durban in 1893.

Together with a shirt and scarf (worn by Gandhi's wife), the Mahatma's dhoti has been sent to the independent Textile Conservation Centre (TCC), London, which has breathed new life into some of the world's most famous costumes, textiles and over 180 tapestries not only on behalf of museums and galleries worldwide, but for a string of private collectors, both known and unknown.

Not that any of Gandhi's dirty linen is being washed in public. Far from it.

It is all being discreetly dhobied well away from the prying eyes of the thousands who daily troop through the state apartments of Hampton Court Palace at East Molesey, west of the capital. The TCC occupies grace-and-favour status within the palace which Cardinal Wolsey began building in 1515, Henry VIII purloined fifteen years later and William and Mary, the third and last of the great builder-patrons, largely finished using the unrivalled talents of artists and master-craftsmen including Grinling Gibbons, Jean Tipu, Antonio Verrio, Morris Emmett and the gardeners London and Wise.

But if there is a manly ring to this string of famous names, today's twenty-nine-strong team at the TCC is distinctly feminine under its present director Nell Hoare, at 34 the fourth in an all-female line dating back to 1975 and dedicated to the relatively recent discipline of textile conservation in all its forms, both ancient and modern. The

centre has two departments: Studies and Research; and Conservation. The former provides the internationally renowned postgraduate Diploma in Textile Conservation, while the latter provides, through its team of fully trained conservators, a full conservation service for a wide range of clients.

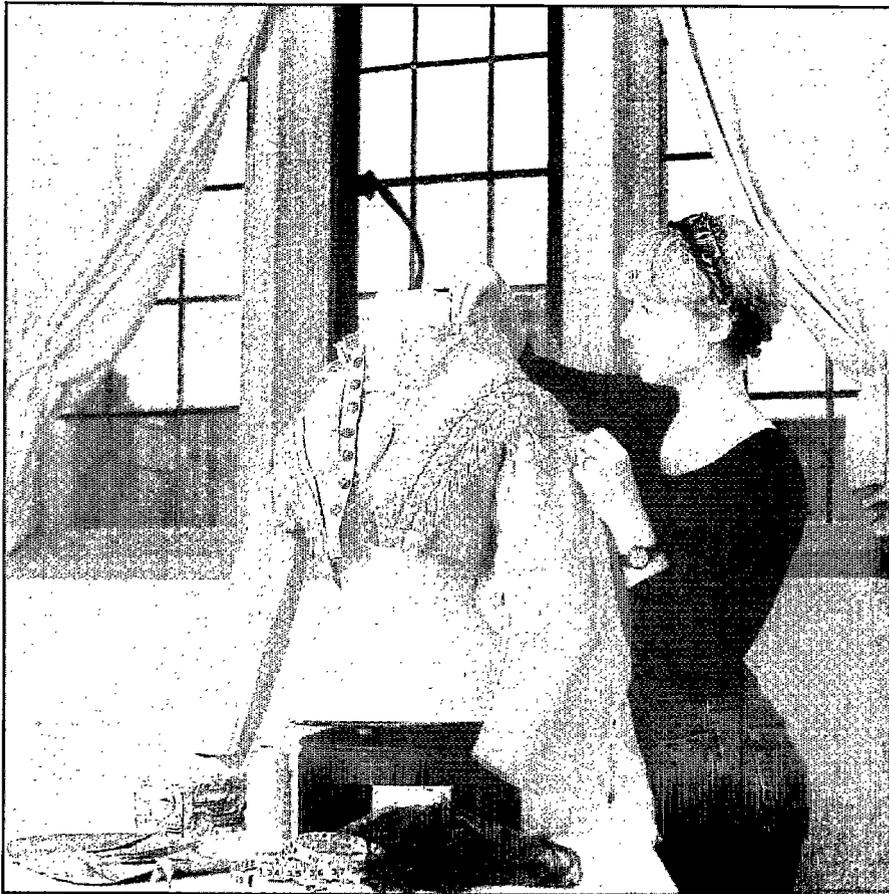
The symbiosis between the students and working conservators is vital to the way that the students learn the context as well as the theory.

The initiative of Karen Finch, the TCC began life in a semidetached house in Ealing. A Dane by birth, very much educated in the craft tradition of her country, and married to a British serviceman, Mrs Finch had become increasingly aware of the need for textile conservation and some form of structured training in the subject. She also saw the need for a centre where historic textiles of value could be brought for investigation and treatment.

Through private work for the University of London's 'History of Dress' programme, Mrs Finch welcomed to her home students from all over the world and built the foundation on which she was to set up a two-year pilot course in textile conservation. As she had also worked in a private capacity for Royal collections, it was suggested that a section of the Tudor apartments at Hampton Court might be suitable as a base for the centre.

But while working within the confines of one of the world's most historic buildings may have its drawbacks in terms of expansion and change ('One simply cannot knock a hole in an outside wall, and put in an extra vent') the disadvantages are far outweighed by the benefits of being at Hampton Court.

© Photo by courtesy of the author



Students from all over the world attend courses at the centre. Here, Charlotte Jenkin from Australia works on a project.

As a location it is extremely desirable.

'If we worked in a large unit on an industrial estate, students and staff would be totally divorced from what the world of museums and galleries is all about: it's about displays, it's about visitors, it's all about pressures. . . . Students go on sessions around the palace as part of their course, and from that point of view it is very useful being based where everything happens,' says Mrs Hoare.

And happen it does.

'An amazing variety of conundrums'

On the teaching side of the establishment, some seventy conservators from countries as far apart as New Zealand and

Norway have, over the years, completed the three-year postgraduate Diploma in Textile Conservation, validated by the University of London through the Courtauld Institute of Art, while scores of specialist conservators and occasional interns have daily faced an amazing variety of conundrums – how best, for instance, to: clean, support and re-stuff Sir Frederick Ashton's costume for Jeremy Fisher which he wore in the film *The Tales of Beatrix Potter* (1972); surface clean a double-sided trade union banner for the Operative Bricklayers Society (Battersea Branch); humidify a dry and dessicated coat from a Spanish colonial man's suit of about 1690, excavated from a grave beneath the floor of the Cathedral of St Francis, Santa Fe (New Mexico), in 1966, having first surface cleaned and relaxed the fibres with de-ionized water and sup-

ported the fragile silk fabric; get to grips with why sequins on a mink dress worn by Ginger Rogers in *Lady in the Dark* (1944) keep popping off; support, for storage and display, a pair of seventeenth-century extended-sole shoes; attempt to stabilize a raincoat in wool tweed by Mary Quant, c. 1960, the latex finish of which is disintegrating before one's very eyes.

For Janey Cronyn, the TCC's Head of Studies and Research, it is increasingly the modern fabrics which will require conservation. While the coming of the nineteenth century saw the introduction of synthetic fibres, they were poorly researched at the time of introduction.

'The underlying problem is that modern fabric and modern fashion is not meant to last; that it is disposable,' Miss Cronyn says. 'Modern rubbers and plastics tend to go very brittle, and the basic problem is to prolong their life, frequently making them useable for teaching purposes.'

Another problem facing today's conservator is that objects and garments, once conserved, do not simply go back on display. As non-museum pieces, they are frequently part of a teaching collection and need to be handled by students and designers to see how they hang. As with Mary Quant's coat, there is nothing that a great deal of research and the reintroduction of a little moisture cannot cure.

The in-built obsolescence which has long plagued conservators of paper and film, as well as those of the modern garment, is now also beginning to worry embroiderers, so much so that a conference organized by the Embroiderers Guild has recently looked at the question as to whether or not in ten years' time their work, too, may well be pock-marked with disintegrating, or already faded, stitching.

With Gandhi's cotton dhoti, however, there is no such problem.

While the museum from which it came had attempted, in theory at least, some extremely good conservation in the prevention of mould growth caused by variable, but generally high, humidity, the gods have conspired against it.

Wrapped in blotting paper impregnated with thymol before being sealed in a plastic bag, the whole then contained within a box dusted with insecticide, the dhoti and the other garments have become badly stained and a 'reversal' technique will have to be found and put into effect. While various chemical tests will determine the exact cause of the staining, the garments themselves are described as 'strong, with just a few areas needing support'.

Stain reversal will be achieved through 'minimum intervention' – terminology at the very forefront of the conservator's lexicon – while at all times ensuring the maintenance of an object's historical integrity.

Nothing, but nothing, must be done to falsify the record.

'Conservation is treating everything about an object as a historical document,' says Miss Cronyn. 'At all times one is trying to preserve information while not letting an object fall apart, disintegrate further or disappear entirely. Conservation is all about making an object apparent in terms of making its design speak again.'

But in making objects 'speak again' any work carried out must be done in such a way that, while bits may be missing, aesthetically speaking it is the 'whole' which can be enjoyed: that while everything done

© Museum of Childhood, Sudbury Hall, Derbyshire (United Kingdom)



Sir Frederick Ashton's costume for the British film The Tales of Beatrix Potter (1972), before (inset) and after conservation.

to an object by a conservator should be 'reversible', the restorer, on the other hand, is frequently to be seen prettying up, adding and subtracting and generally scrubbing an item to death, inevitably affecting its integrity as a historical object.

'Paint fading may well be indicative that an object has not been well cared for,' says Dinah Eastop, former Director and now a part-time tutor, 'or that fading in a textile is the result of the way it has been used or displayed, thus giving information about its history.'

The 'commercial' Conservation Department has a full-time complement of eleven trained, experienced textile conservators—probably the greatest number working under one roof anywhere in the world. The centre is thus fully capable of tackling large and frequently complex commissions.

'Loving care and attention to detail'

But conservation is not simply a question of dealing only with the highly important objects. Work carried out on a sampler, hand-delivered to the centre by Auntie Flo from her cottage in the wilds of the countryside, is given the same loving care and attention to detail as that given to the seventeenth-century, 35 foot Esfahan carpet, belonging to the Thyssen von Bornemisza collection, and air-freighted from Switzerland for conservation work before going on view in the purpose-built Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza in Madrid.

'Ordinary people who know our work come to us with their conservation problems and take advantage of our expertise,' says Mrs Hoare. 'Great emphasis is placed on client relationships and I expect them to think of the centre as user-friendly, that they can talk to us about the treatment involved.'

The Conservation Department is currently working on a rare fifteenth-century cope sent from a church in Kent. The clients visited the centre not knowing what conservation involved. The conservator in charge explained in great detail what was planned, why it would be done, the way it would be done and what the end result would be.

The centre also sets great store on its scientific and library back-up. This library, housing perhaps the best textile conservation resource in the world, is widely used not only by students and staff but by a constant stream of outsiders, others involved in research, and government departments. Rather than continue to use 'a rather archaic system using little coloured dots' (as the Director puts it) it was decided to recatalogue. This has just been completed. ▀

But for all the centre's expertise, its world renown for excellence and the care and attention lavished on the objects brought in for treatment, since its very beginnings (and in truly English fashion) it continues to live a hand-to-mouth existence, scrimping and saving to make ends meet and struggling annually to find the funds necessary to keep it ticking over.

As Director, Nell Hoare sees her priorities in the coming years as being to firmly establish the centre on a secure financial basis, to ensure it maintains the highest quality in teaching and conservation, and to continue to help develop textile conservation techniques.

On top of that she is keen, if space and resources allow, to run short courses on, for example, the care of textiles for curators who are not textile specialists but who have textiles in their care.

'Thanks to Karen Finch's inspiration and vision, the centre has put textile conservation on the map worldwide. Of about 350 people working in textile conservation around the world, 146 have trained at the centre as students, apprentices, interns or on short courses,' Mrs Hoare says.

This is a formidable achievement for an independent organization that has never received government funding.

With student fees for the three-year, post-graduate course currently running at £7,200 annually, and living costs in London conservatively put at £5,000, the centre wanted to ensure it would continue to attract the best students and not just those who can afford to pay the fees.

Faced with this problem, the centre has not sat back and has been very successful in fund-raising. Students who do not receive

bursaries from their home government will usually receive a bursary from the centre to cover their fees. And while raising funds for bursaries may be a long, tough haul, a recently announced Getty Grant Program Challenge Award will, from 1994, provide in perpetuity up to three student stipends.

On the academic side, the training given can be compared to that lavished on a medical student.

A TCC student cannot just be left alone in a room with a historic object and an instruction to 'get on with it'. A trained conservator must be present at all times to ensure that the student is not running amok and, in the initial stages of training, to help determine such basics as when a bit of dirt really is a bit of dirt or an important part of the original object.

Research and development

The TCC also sees its role as being at the cutting edge of research into textile conservation: teaching, researching, publishing and serving as a source for information while developing new techniques in such areas as tapestry conservation, the removal of modern adhesives with enzyme treatments, the degradation of silk, non-destructive examination techniques such as photography using infra-red and ultra-violet radiation, the treatment of modern materials such as latex, and the development of passive techniques in upholstery conservation.

Mrs Hoare also wants to take a long, hard look at the question of 'specialisms' for the persons generally trained in textile conservation, a training which might well include upholstery, a subject looked at by the centre some ten years ago that should

probably be taken up yet again, and to develop a core of practitioners in this field.

'We also hope to offer the short, summer course in a particular technique: something the centre has researched, or which has been researched elsewhere. This could include the use of gels and poultices, for example, to remove adhesives,' she adds.

In the meantime there is the small matter of exactly what to do with a Roman-Egyptian fragment from a shroud, painted with a likeness of Nefertiti, which was stuck to a piece of hardboard with animal glue in the 1950s, before the dire consequences of such treatment were fully appreciated, by a museum of repute (which in the interests of confidentiality the centre will not name). Full of acids, the hardboard has begun to warp and, in the process, badly distort an already fragile piece of fabric.

As wood chisels may ultimately be needed to remove the hardboard backing, a student with good carpentry skills may well be the answer.

Who better, then, than Tom Bilson?

Tom Bilson?

'Oh, we're more than happy to welcome men . . .,' says Janey Cronyn. 'It's just a pity that the idea of doing something with one's hands on a fairly small scale, which is of itself an intellectual exercise, frequently involving science, doesn't come across as a career. Men tend to rule out a career in textile conservation rather early on in their plan for a working life,' she adds.

For the TTC staff, meanwhile, the immediate consideration is the drying of Gandhi's dhoti. . . . ■

Safeguarding an age-old craft: a shoe museum in England

June Swann

June Swann spent most of her thirty-eight-year career at Northampton Museum as Keeper of the Boot and Shoe Collection, the largest of its kind in England. She recounts how a combination of common sense, imagination and a great deal of learning by doing helped to create a collection of international renown.

I was born in the shoemaking town of Northampton and, after college, drifted in 1950 into working for the museum there. It was founded in 1865 to cover the history of the county, with an art gallery added in 1913. Like many museums, it included rooms set aside for the local speciality, in our case three rooms for boots and shoes. One room showed the history of shoe

fashions in England from Roman times to the 1940s, plus a section from the rest of the world, mainly of the nineteenth century. It also included costume and lace, the latter also being a local industry in the nineteenth century.

A small second room had four early machines and cases of shoe tools, while the



© Northampton Museum and Art Gallery

Northampton Museum's Shoemaker's Shop, as set up in 1913.

third was set up as a handsewn shoemakers' shop of c.1860. This must have been one of the first such shops in an English museum, for it was devised in 1913 with the help of elderly men, former handsewers whose knowledge of the trade went back to the time depicted. In the thirty-eight years I was to spend working there, it was consistently the most popular exhibit. The whole ensemble, basically completed by 1928, with new cases added in the 1940s, constitutes the largest collection of historical footwear in the country, totalling about 750 shoes.

In 1950 the country was still recovering from wartime restrictions, and the museum, run by the civic authorities, lacked money and staff, which consisted of two people working under the town's Librarian-Curator. Neither of us had had previous museum training, and we were unsupervised, which has caused me considerable concern in later years, especially as I still see similar appointments and the amount of damage done by unqualified work on the objects. The time is long overdue to insist on basic training before unsupervised staff begin: how to avoid handling objects, the ways to handle them when necessary, the safest environmental conditions, the importance of cleanliness, pest control, cataloguing and recording, and what treatment to leave to a specialist. A compulsory day or two of training would suffice to prevent the worst calamities.

Cataloguing and storage

Fortunately we were blessed with a certain amount of common sense. The senior assistant had already begun a costume cataloguing system on index cards, which I quickly adapted for shoes: description on one side, line drawing on the back. It was sufficiently refined to continue in use to the

present day, being published with illustrations in *Costume* No. 11, and has since been expanded for larger information sheets. In 1950 we could barely afford the smallest cards available, and I still recall the Curator's horror when we spent over two-thirds of the month's cash allocation on them.

In 1977–9 I was one of a small group of curators assisting the Museum Documentation Association to devise a costume catalogue card. But for all the hours spent, it seemed no more satisfactory than those we already used, though hopefully computer-compatible. Certainly my shoe system has proved invaluable when reading other museums' cards in a language I was not fully fluent in, and I thank colleagues who have adopted it. The trade is fortunate that it defined terminology in 1913, and we were able, with the help of the local college, to adapt this for historic shoes and publish a glossary.

At the same time as initiating the catalogue, we reorganized storage, the previous 'system' being to have at least one shoe, Roman coin and fossil in each storeroom cupboard box. A separate room was set aside for the few shoes not on display, with wooden cupboards with slatted shelves, to allow air to circulate. But this proved unsatisfactory, as acid-free tissue was needed to protect against the slats, thus defeating their purpose, and more mysteriously, allowing dust to circulate. The method was gladly abandoned when the shoes moved to a larger room.

We were obliged to have the cheapest cupboards, of wood blockboard. But I insisted that each section have an air filter: an 8 cm diameter circle cut out, with metal mesh on the outside, muslin inside and cotton wool between. Even in the dirty conditions of a town centre, it was ten



House for clog (geta) makers.

years before any dust became noticeable inside, as air exchange, with fluctuations in temperature, left dust in the filters. For those museums where air conditioning is an impossible dream, this simple filter is a cheap and effective answer.

I also insisted that cupboards be well clear of the floor, because of damp. We discovered how essential this is, when the inevitable water leak happened: it may be only once in thirty-eight years, but other museums have been less fortunate. Its importance was again demonstrated last year during the Los Angeles riots, when a museum's downtown store was flooded by the sprinkler system, set off by fire in the adjacent building. In civil disturbances, it proved difficult to find a police guard to guarantee access to turn the water off. So keep objects clear of the floor.

To protect the shoes, and because of limited space, we stored them as the trade does, in boxes. (Acid-free cardboard is best if available.) I chose three different sizes to accommodate shoes and knee boots. Over-size objects were dealt with individually. Cupboards were built 13 inches (32 cm) deep, with height for a maximum of eight boxes. Over the years I looked enviously at those museums with clean stores and space to keep shoes on shelves, covered in transparent film, permitting immediate inspection and access to the precise item required.

But I was even more envious of those museums which adopted the art gallery system: primary galleries with elegant displays of the most important items, and secondary galleries with the rest stacked floor to ceiling; that is, most of the objects



© Pascal Lamoureux

Detail of the showcase of footwear from Henri IV to Louis XIV, Musée International de la Chaussure, Romans-sur-Isère (France).

on show, essential for designers, scholars, students and authors. In a specialized museum used by people from all over the world, the whole collection must be available. But the demand on staff time, when objects are boxed in stores requiring constant supervision, becomes impossibly expensive. Visible storage encourages use, as well as saving space and staff. Of course, because of the shoes' sensitivity, light must be reduced to the minimum. It should not exceed 50 lux, and each case should be fitted with a viewer-operated time switch. The leather displays in the Deutsches Ledermuseum at Offenback-am-Main (Germany) are good examples although I would prefer the addition of emergency-style low lighting at floor level so that the entire room is not plunged into total darkness when not in use.

I tried to keep in touch with other shoe museums around the world: at Street in Somerset (United Kingdom); Fougères and Romans-sur-Isère (France); Waalwijk (Netherlands); Izeghem (Belgium); Pirmasens and Weissenfels (Germany); Schönenwerd (Switzerland); Vigevano (Italy); Barcelona

(Spain); Wlin (Czech Republic); Philadelphia (United States); Toronto (Canada); Fukuyama (Japan).

As the collection became better known, it was obvious that a book-list on the history of shoe fashions was essential, to avoid repetitive letter writing. It was pitifully short in 1952, but, even so, too many of the books listed could not be recommended. Accordingly, I kept the printed comments to a minimum, and marked each bibliography for the individual inquiry. The bibliography went through a number of editions, as more books were published. But even now, none contains the wealth of detail essential for identifying or re-creating historic styles, and we must still refer to the appropriate shoes, even after studying catalogue records.

We also published catalogues on various aspects of the collection: the 'Shoe and Shoemaker Pictures and Works of Art', 'Shoe Buckles', 'Concealed Shoes'; and other bibliographies on clogs, models, skates, buttonhooks, tools. An extensive library of photographs was built up for

sale, some of which were published in a *Picture Book of Boots and Shoes*, others in postcard form. In recent years a number of cheap leaflets were duplicated on whatever became a common subject of inquiry, which reduced time spent dealing with individuals. Outside publishers eventually made available my article on 'Shoes to 1600' and the books, *Shoes 1600-1980* and the history of *Shoemaking*.

Building the collection

Shoes had no commercial value for many years, though paintings of shoemakers might be highly priced. Funds could rarely be raised from the shoe trade, in decline in the United Kingdom due to imports made with cheaper labour. We received shoes in small quantities from ordinary people (most women save their wedding shoes and the baby's first shoes), and larger collections from long-established factories and technical classes as they closed, as well as from the very few collectors who specialized in footwear.

In 1968 Christie's began sales of costume, whereupon the price rocketed, only to decline as more vendors cashed in and then increase again in the 1980s when investing in antiques became fashionable. By then the museum's reputation was such that few bid against us, or indeed against other museums with a reputation for serious research. I trust they are now carrying out the research which justified Northampton's acquisition of so many shoes. By 1988 the collection had reached over 9,000 shoes and, backed up by an extensive library, appeared then to be the largest in the world.

New acquisitions were routinely cleaned, conserved and catalogued. Most were then displayed briefly in a 'Recent Acquisitions'

case, if they could not be integrated in existing displays. Over the years, a number of schemes for re-display and other premises were drawn up by successive curators and committees, only to be shelved for lack of funds. For years I deplored the old-fashioned appearance, and with too much to show the main room resembled a secondary gallery. Some may query my provision of information and research facilities, leaving no time for displays for ordinary visitors (I worked mainly alone from 1955 to 1986); but the public never complained, and numbers remained steady.

I note with some amusement the heart-searching in museums on how to 'collect the twentieth century': I had inherited a collection which had always acquired contemporary shoes since at least 1873, and I continued the practice. That included factories' best sellers and samples, some of which did not go into mass production, as well as designers' sketches and customers' purchases. Sometimes friends provided funds for examples from top international designers. One balletomane persuaded great dancers to present shoes from memorable performances, though finding a pair in reasonable condition was not easy. We ensured too that other specialized workwear, especially for the armed services, much of which is made in Northamptonshire, was also well represented, for we aimed to cover footwear at all levels of society and for all purposes. It is fortunate that shoes concealed in buildings over many centuries for superstitious purposes provide ordinary working wear, so often absent from costume collections.

I very quickly realized, as I struggled to catalogue the collection built up before the First World War, how essential it is to record as much as possible about the history of each object. It was pointless to acquire shoes brought to England as travel

souvenirs, without information, unless they were really spectacular. I concentrated on acquiring representative shoes on my own travels, where I could record date, place, something of their significance, and changes in 'traditional' styles, as new synthetic materials and dyes penetrated everywhere. Each country should be encouraged to publish the history of its own footwear.

In 1950–51, when I was still a beginner, many old shoemakers complained that a tool was wrongly named. In my ignorance, I altered labels, until I realized that the name might vary from town to village, and even from one part of town to another. Unfortunately, by then, the number of handsewers had diminished, and it was too late to record the variations. In the early 1950s, as they died, their tools and equipment, then unsaleable, were offered to the museum. Many sets contained at least one unique tool devised for some specific task by the shoemaker himself. We acquired the evidence of their ingenuity, and of the makers and whole trade whose history has still to be researched.

More is known about the suppliers of machinery. As shoemaking methods changed in the 1960s, much nineteenth-century machinery was discarded. I aimed for a complete range, covering the more than 200 factory processes, for in the mid-nineteenth century the shoe trade appears to have been unique in mechanizing each hand process rather than rethinking how to make shoes by machine. The number of machines in the collection matched the number of processes when I left in 1988. Machines were cleaned and put in working order. I hoped that, as unemployment increased, funds would become available to employ ex-shoemakers in one of the numerous disused factories, using the machines to make shoes, providing a bespoke service, generating income, while at

the same time demonstrating the techniques to visitors, and saving historic buildings – just as I wished to have a handsewer working in the 1913 workshop. Unfortunately, this appeared to be too big a leap of the imagination for government-controlled funds, which continued to elude us. We were fulfilling the aims of a shoe collection of international standing, without national funds, except for occasional grants towards a work of art.

Sadly, many shoemaking skills have been lost. Although we record the tradition that Northampton shoemakers stitched 60 to the inch, that ability has not been passed on. Museums have a duty to preserve the intangible skills as well as the material objects. Shoemaking has been known as the 'gentle craft' since the 1580s, but the tools, machines and even the shoes lack heart without the presence of those kindly men who left an indelible impression on my life. I hope their spirit is preserved in the collection and that their fine tradition lives on. ■

The participative museum

Dan Bernfeld

Dan Bernfeld, an academic and consultant with international institutions, is the author of several books on sociocultural topics, including the ten-volume Fichier européen de la participation (1978–88), and the reports of the Campaigns for the Countryside and Urban Renaissance. UNESCO published his work Un nouvel enjeu: la participation in 1983. He comments here on the human factor – the relationship between staff and visitors – which he sees as the principal challenge facing museums today.

Four years ago an article published in this magazine raised some basic questions about how contemporary museums were developing (Kenneth Hudson, 'An Unnecessary Museum', *Museum*, Vol. XLI, No. 2 (No. 162), 1989). In this article, the writer described the trend towards mega-museums, such as the Musée d'Orsay or the La Villette science museum in Paris, drawing large crowds who are usually just following a fashion, as a dangerous phenomenon because it runs contrary to the true purpose of museums. In other words, we are witnessing the birth of the 'unnecessary museum'.

It seems obvious to me that these huge establishments, which are given all the resources they need, may cause problems for the small, specialist museums, which need more material and financial resources as well as staff. But the arguments put forward in the article are interesting, too, and without wishing to set container against content, crowds against small numbers of visitors, or passing fashions against supposedly authentic values, I feel I have a contribution to make to the debate.

I should like to propose the 'survival triangle' as a criterion for evaluation. It has enabled me to obtain encouraging results in a closely related field of research – the development of local socio-cultural resources. The survival triangle deals with the three following aspects of today's museum: the content, or what the museum has to exhibit, the container, or setting in which it displays its collections and, last but not least, its treatment of visitors.

I do not intend to discuss the content of the museum in detail – at least not at this stage – because this subject has been well covered already. All that needs to be said here is that a 'museum democracy' implies

continual adjustment of the balance between visitors' requirements and the museum's educational mission.

The 'container', a subject to which many *Museum International* articles, in fact whole sections, have been devoted, is very much in the news. The revival of museums today is largely the result of co-operation between museographers, architects and local authorities. The desire to make the museum more attractive, both inside and out, and to make visitors feel physically and psychologically at ease, is undoubtedly the underlying cause of this revival. In my recent research work, I have devoted some attention to the tedious but necessary business of the typological clarification of architectural revival in the museum world. The most common method adopted is to create extra space (new wings, extra floors or more room underground), an option that lies midway between simply renovating an existing building and constructing a new one.

My reaction to such dictums as 'Architecture should take a back seat', 'It is the museum's contents that really matter' is a wry smile. We could always try putting our exhibits in tents!

The biggest problem in the survival triangle for museums is the relationship between visitor and museum staff. Not that the two other factors I have mentioned – content and container – are not key issues, but the human factor, by which I mean the new type of visitor and the new type of staff, seems to me to constitute the real challenge facing museums today.

Museum democracy means receiving, and therefore educating, a new type of visitor (there is obviously no question of accepting the concept of democratization of museums). There are a lot more visitors to

museums than there used to be, and they have fewer preconceptions regarding established values. This is also true of museum staff; in addition, their training is a fast-developing field which has not yet found its direction, and which is not at all 'traditional', any more than the new type of visitor is.

I do not propose to deal here with training, which seems to me a huge area in itself. There is only one aspect I wish to mention: the new, unprecedented kinds of relationship that are growing up between visitors and staff. Without wishing to make an issue of it, I should like to describe an extreme case which I encountered on the closing day of the Campaign for the Countryside organized by the Council of Europe in the 1980s. A boat trip was being offered from Travemünde, Germany, along a coastline with a great diversity of natural features – beautiful landscapes, constantly changing colours as land and sea met, and so on. For a better view, I climbed on to the top deck with some of my colleagues. While the 'official' guide overwhelmed participants with detailed descriptions of the *Land's* various achievements – regional development, political decisions and a high-speed train that was soon to link northern Germany with the country's major cities – a bird landed on a marker buoy out at sea. That was when the miracle occurred: the boat's pilot spent half an hour telling us about the origins, habits and life of this rare species. I have only been so moved on one other occasion, when a boatman taking me across the Venice Lagoon from San Giorgio to Malamocco told me what he had learnt about the *acqua alta* phenomenon from navigating the lagoon every day. It was a refreshing change from the platitudes of decision-makers endlessly expounding on the floods caused by 'man's assault on the ecological balance of the lagoon'.

I should like to conclude my discussion of the relationship between visitors and staff by suggesting that a sort of 'complicity' can occur once going to museums becomes a need and a habit. This need, if felt as such by both sides, and the habit that leads to closer acquaintance, can sometimes bring about a real meeting of minds. This kind of complicity can only be achieved if the people who appreciate museums come face to face with staff who appreciate *them*.

Involving the public

We often talk about architectural quality, by which I mean the museum building itself as much as its internal layout. We rarely mention the quality of human relationships, yet they are crucial at a time when museums are having to deal with a sudden flood of visitors. Failure to give priority to the human element means forgetting that the museum has now become a public place, much like a railway station or town hall. For example finding the registry office in Bologna town hall means trekking through endless corridors lined with as many pictures as an art gallery, and some of the best examples of French regional cooking are to be found in Paris railway stations.

On a day that I shall never forget, I tagged along with a group of German visitors to the exhibition of paintings by David at the Louvre. Their young, perfectly competent guide, outstanding above all for her enthusiasm for her job, was telling us about some of the paintings when an unusual incident occurred. The group's own guide, an old man who was also acting as interpreter, suddenly launched into a long discussion of the picture showing the murder of Marat in his bath. I was deeply moved by his words and now, two years later, I know why: they provided a foretaste of what I

now call 'the participative museum'. Which brings me to the heart of the matter: museums must either become participative or disappear. We should not be fooled by the large crowds – a fashion, some would say (I would say 'Why not?') – because they could fade away as suddenly as they appeared. The people of tomorrow will want to be involved in the hanging, selection and classification of items in an exhibition, and even in such specific aspects as the restoration or accommodation of works of art. If proof is needed, I could point to the success of 'The Secret Life of Masterpieces' exhibition at the Grand Palais, Paris, in 1980, or of the Open Day held when the stonework and sculptures of the Cour Napoléon at the Louvre were being restored in March 1992. Sculpture restoration experts were delighted to see an interested crowd surrounding the stonemasons, and the public were equally delighted to come into such close and meaningful contact with these works of art. I was particularly struck by the comment of one old gentleman: 'I shall see the sculptures of the Louvre in quite a different light after meeting the stonemason like this.' In future, why shouldn't we let the public in on picture restoration workshops and picture-hanging sessions?

It is true that in its current form, the museum's 'survival triangle' obliges us to take a qualitative approach. Take away one of the triangle's three sides and a crisis is the immediate result. For almost all the museums established or restored during the 1980s, the triangle is intact: nowadays we can hardly conceive of a museum with dusty stonework and poor lighting which ignores the needs of its visitors, or of a lack of highly trained, welcoming and attentive staff. This is what the triangle means if we apply it to the two Paris museums mentioned earlier: the Musée d'Orsay and La Villette.

Before ending this article, I should like to make special mention of ecomuseums. This is the sort of decentralized establishment that seems best suited to local people interested in their history and their roots; it is also the one that involves the most participation. It is vital, however, that it should have sufficient finances and staff at its disposal. During the European Campaign for the Countryside several fascinating experiments came to light, one of them being the Condeixa Ecomuseum in Portugal. This represented quite an undertaking, since it involved gathering together in one place and presenting in an interesting way local landscapes (humid regions with their fauna and flora), historic crafts that are being revived (pottery, weaving, watermills, olive pressing and traditional cheese-making) and such fascinating projects as the restoration of old organs in village churches (a team of enthusiasts has already restored several dozen). The triangle here lacks staff to receive visitors owing to a shortage of grants.

Is there still room for innovation in 'big' museums, or is this the speciality of the smaller fry? That is the crucial question Kenneth Hudson seems to be asking. To answer it, perhaps, here is a story.

One day in the Paris Métro I saw a young woman give a glove-puppet show, using a curtain which she suspended between two poles and a portable cassette player to provide music. I noticed that the passengers watched with the same rapt attention as children watching puppet plays. I feel this experience allows me to maintain – even if some people would not agree – that museums are subject to the same criteria for socio-cultural analysis as all other art forms. The concept of cultural democracy (and, as I said before, beware of the democratization of culture!) is an essential part of plain democracy. ■

Combating the traffic in stolen works of art in France

Mireille Ballestrazzi

France's method of combating the illicit traffic of stolen works of art has attracted much attention in professional circles. With strong support from its parent Ministry of the Interior, and benefiting from co-ordinated police work within and beyond national frontiers, the Central Office for the Repression of Theft of Works and Objects of Art has enlisted the active co-operation of the art and museum community. Mireille Ballestrazzi, Chief of the Office, explains how the system works.

In 1975, in order to counter the theft and receiving of stolen art works, France set up a specialized national agency, the Office Central pour la Repression du Vol d'Œuvres et d'Objets d'Art. This Office was established within the Ministry of the Interior by an interministerial decree signed by five government ministers.

Operating under the Direction Centrale de la Police Judiciaire, the Office was assigned four main tasks: co-ordination of operations aimed at the prevention of theft; co-ordination of operations aimed at countering the theft and receiving of stolen goods; centralization of information; training.

The Office also forms part of Interpol's National Central Bureau for France, and in that capacity handles all international information exchanges relating to works of art and, more generally, to cultural property.

Prevention

Concurrently with its tasks of law enforcement and investigation, the Office conducts publicity campaigns to assist in the protection of art works. It keeps in regular contact with various authorities representing key partners in its work, in particular France's Directorate for Museums, the Heritage Directorate at the Ministry of Culture, and the diocesan authorities.

The Office organizes lectures for museum curators and curators of collections of antiquities and *objets d'art* in the various French *départements*, art market professionals, insurance agents and associations of private collectors anxious for advice on security. It also takes part in national and international symposia on the protection of cultural property, for example, the International Committee on Museum Security

of the International Council of Museums (ICOM).

It is an active member of two bodies set up in 1990 by the Director of Museums in France, Mr Jacques Sallois: L'Observatoire du Marché de l'Art, which monitors the movements of art works in France, using information provided in particular by the customs services and working in collaboration with representatives of professional art dealers' organizations; and The Committee for Museum Security, which analyses security in museums, plans measures to improve security and gives advice to curators and museum surveillance officers. A security consultant has been appointed to guide the committee in its work.

Enforcement, information and training

Alongside its traditional task of producing and compiling documentation and co-ordinating investigations, the Central Office is developing a genuinely operational strategy. Its teams of investigators take an active part in the enforcement of laws concerning national and international trafficking in stolen works of art. Thanks to their nationwide judicial remit, the specialized investigators are able to take action at any time anywhere on French territory, providing technical support for local services or intervening at the direct request of the courts.

The Office is responsible for circulating information on stolen works, choosing the form or level most appropriate for each individual case: nationwide, international (through Interpol), or restricted, targeted circulation.

Action to combat the receiving of stolen art works is one of the Office's ongoing con-

Painting of the Virgin and Child by Cornelius van Harlem, stolen from a French museum and recovered in 1989.



Photo by courtesy of the author

cerns. The Documentation Service centralizes and processes all information relating to thefts of art works committed in France, and constantly updates its computerized file of stolen works. In addition, a database storing information on specialized networks of art thieves and on receivers of stolen goods operating at national and international levels is maintained by the police officers working for the Documentation Service.

Police co-operation in France is reinforced in a number of ways: organization of regular operational meetings of the different services; organization of 'one-off' concerted operations targeted on known gangs of art robbers; organization of meetings to

unify methods of describing works of art in order to improve information exchanges.

Knowledge of the clandestine art market and its workings is extremely important, and the Office is seeking to build up as wide a network of contacts as possible for that purpose. Nevertheless, what would seem to be the crucial problem has still to be solved, namely the identification of the works and objects of art as and when recovered.

This is the major difficulty facing the police services, in particular where antiques and antiquities are concerned. Public and private owners are therefore advised to do three things which will enable the criminal

investigation services to identify stolen objects more easily in the event of their discovery: draw up a precise, detailed description of the works in their possession; take clear photographs of all works held; and mark all items of value. (In addition to those marketed by certain private companies, marking systems can be devised by individual owners with a little imagination.)

A training policy for specialized police officers has been developed by the Office since 1988 with the assistance of the Ministry of Culture and professional art dealers, with the aim of ensuring optimum efficiency thanks to a better identification of the art works and a clearer understanding of all relevant information. The training courses are designed for investigators working for the Office (evening courses and training programmes organized by specialized private institutions), police superintendents and inspectors in charge of investigations of thefts of art works in regional criminal investigation departments, examining magistrates and judges from the Public Prosecutor's Office, and police officers from other countries who wish to acquire specialized training.

International and European relations

The European Community's abolition of frontiers on 1 January 1993 and its implications for the movement of cultural property has been the subject of reflection and discussion for several years. Successful action to combat trafficking in stolen works of art and their illicit circulation calls for maximum co-operation among the Community's member states.

Some of the twelve European countries have listed items of cultural property which are not allowed to leave their territory.

Others, such as France, cannot draw up definitive lists of national cultural treasures on account of the large numbers of items which are unknown to national administrations. This situation is likely to create major problems for border controls in the future. Serious consideration should be given to the establishment of a European databank, meeting the appropriate criteria.

In France, a task force has been set up to report to the Prime Minister on problems linked to European unification and in particular that of the circulation of cultural property. Specialists working for the Ministries of Culture, Justice and the Interior (including staff from the Central Office) take part in these discussions. They are preparing a French position paper on the subject for the European Community and studying the new national legislative measures that will be necessary in order for France to adapt to the Single Market.

At intergovernmental level, three co-operation agencies have been set up: the Trevi Group – a European agency for police co-operation; SCHENGEN – a police co-operation body pooling certain categories of information, which currently has eight member countries; and EUROPOL – the Trevi Group was assigned the task in 1991 of setting up a European Police Office (EUROPOL), which is referred to in the Maastricht Treaty on European Union.

At European Community level, two draft texts provide for the protection of the cultural property of member states: a draft Community regulation concerning customs checks on works of art at the external borders of the EC, of which the customs services themselves are the architects; and a draft Community directive concerning the restitution of certain items of cultural property coming into the category of a state's 'national treasure'. ▶

All existing central offices of the Direction Centrale de la Police Judiciaire are involved in discussion on the creation of EUROPOL, each in its own area of competence. The first service will be the EUROPOL Drugs Unit. It is hoped that a group modelled on the Drugs Unit will be set up in the future within EUROPOL with special responsibility for investigating thefts of art works. It would then be necessary for each country to rapidly set up its own specialized national central office modelled on the two existing Offices, the French and the Italian.

Outside the Community, the Office maintains regular contacts with other countries throughout the world. Co-operation with the countries of Eastern Europe has developed in the past two years. Briefing and training courses are organized by France's Service de Co-opération Technique Internationale de Police, with the support of the Direction Centrale de la Police Judiciaire (responsible to the French Ministry of the Interior), in certain East European countries, for the benefit of the police services concerned.

It appears that very large numbers of items of cultural property are exported illegally from these countries. The competent authorities of the other states must remain vigilant if the networks involved in smuggling works of art out of the countries of Eastern Europe – works that sooner or later find their way on to the international art market – are to be brought to light.

We must all feel concerned by the plunder of many countries' art treasures, and work together to protect the world's cultural heritage. ■

Who are they?

Aleksander Zinovievich Krein

Putting visitors to work to solve a difficult problem was the novel approach devised by the A. S. Pushkin State Museum in Moscow. An enthralling 'museum detective story' ensued which is recounted by the Director of the museum.

In all of my more than four decades in the world of museums I have never come across a museum that did not use representational works of art as its most important documents. I am not speaking of art museums: with them the question does not arise. But if we consider historical, literary, musical, even technical, and especially memorial, museums, the question of the interrelationship with figurative art becomes very complicated. Any kind of museum will of course do its best to achieve the highest artistic level in its collections. But in the above-mentioned museums a high artistic level is not always possible: for them, the historical importance and the subject of a painting or drawing are very often more important than its artistic quality.

Let's look at the A. S. Pushkin State Museum in Moscow, and more particularly the problem of attributing portraits of Pushkin's contemporaries – people belonging to a period separated from us by almost two centuries. It's hardly necessary to explain in detail the importance of portraits to a literary museum. Portraits of the author himself painted during his lifetime, of people close to him, portraits of unknown contemporaries to provide historical and typical background – all these constitute a first-rate artistic component of extraordinary importance in the collection of any literary museum. And the museum must, for each portrait (as for each landscape or thematic painting), carry out the same research work as any art museum: fix the period, the date, the identity of the artist, etc. But it is even more important to find out who the subject of a portrait is, whether that person has any link with the life and work of the author, and the circumstances in which it was painted.

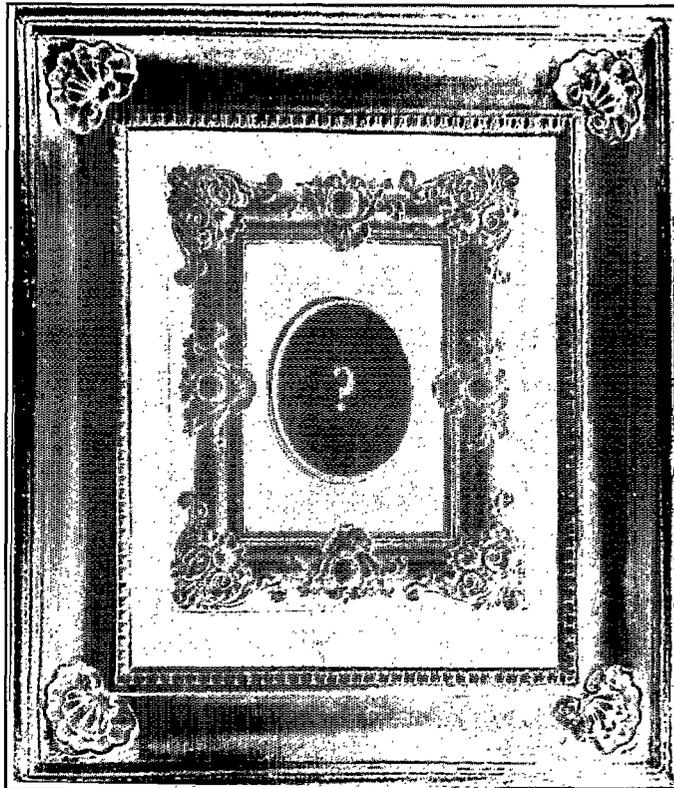
This is an unpredictable but utterly fascinating and creative aspect of museum

work. Sometimes the attribution of one portrait takes years: archives must be searched, innumerable reference books perused, other museums visited, specialists consulted, the portraits examined with X-rays, ultraviolet rays and goodness knows what other kinds of rays, but when the attribution is completed and has been confirmed by a reputable group of specialists it invariably becomes a museum event, a museum discovery. The staff of our museum have been able to attribute dozens of portraits and to put on exhibition quite a few new artistic items of importance in illustrating Pushkin's life and work. The story of these attributions is told in articles they have written in the press, in books and albums published by the museum and in the present author's own books.¹

An unusual exhibition

But at a certain point the work ground to a halt. The museum had collected about eighty portraits, clearly belonging to the Pushkin period; but who were these people? We ourselves were unable to put a name to the individuals portrayed in them. Then we hit upon the idea of organizing an exhibition and showing it to art critics, historians, museum workers, collectors, Pushkin scholars, 'friends of the museum': in the words of Pushkin, 'to take over the mind of another'! Any opinion, any assumption, any guess, any hypothesis would provide us with a thread we could follow as a further line of inquiry. As happens in all museums, paper was spread on the floor of the rooms closed to the public and portraits were laid out on it in a sort of rehearsal for the hanging. But what was unexpected was that into the rooms came a member of the museum's academic council, the author and literary critic. Irakly Andronikov, who exclaimed: 'This is a

Photo by courtesy of the author



Design of invitation for the 'Who are they?' exhibition.

Pushkin exhibition, isn't it? What does it matter if it's made up of portraits of unknown people! What does it matter if Pushkin didn't know these people – they almost certainly knew him, and read him. This is the crowd that surrounded the poet. This is his era! Don't show this exhibition to a narrow circle. Show it to everybody who visits the museum!

The painter Evgeny Rosenblum suggested: 'Let's turn this exhibition into a guessing game for the public. Let's awaken their interest, catch their attention, turn them into "sleuths". But let's also teach the public something about methods of attribution. So let's display a few examples of successful attribution together with the documents and photographs on which they're based. And we shall certainly make the exhibition beautiful and attractive if we surround the portraits with typical every-

day objects from the lives of some of the "characters" depicted in them.'

This lively and unusual exhibition project also aroused the enthusiasm of the entire museum staff. Suggestions flooded in.

For example, the exhibition included a large set of materials relating to an earlier attribution of a portrait of Pushkin as a child. A particular feature was the reproduction, on transparent film and on an identical scale, of all the portraits of Pushkin painted during his lifetime. A convincing series was thus obtained for purposes of comparison. The exhibition even included the findings of forensic experts, who used precise scientific methods to identify the subjects of the portraits. There were several such sets of materials.

In order to make the exhibition more interesting to a wider public the portraits were displayed alongside related objects. Beside the portraits of military men, for example, would be displayed specimens of weapons, medals, decoration ribbons and other regalia; beside the portraits of ladies were displayed ladies' gowns, etc. This was a kind of game for the creators of the exhibition and, it seemed, made a fascinating and beautiful display, for it enabled those who saw it to transport themselves back to Pushkin's time. But this game also led to very important scientific and enlightening results. It stands to reason that very few visitors to the museum were capable of attributing a portrait. But once visitors had become, through the exhibition, participants in the unravelling of the mystery of the 'museum detective story', as it were, they acquired a feel for the museum profession and learned to pay closer attention to museum materials.

The design of the entrance ticket to the exhibition embodied the idea of 'mystery'.

A frame inside a frame, and inside that a third, oval, frame with a question mark in place of the portrait. On the ticket we wrote

This exhibition, 'Portraits of Unknown Subjects', is an unusual one. It represents an experiment: its purpose is to extend the principle of public participation in the making of collections to scrutiny of the portraits in them. Friends! We ask you to help us in our investigations. We should like you write down on the forms provided any deductions, ideas or tips you may be able to give us (please state the number of the exhibit you are referring to). Who are these people? What are their names? Were they acquaintances of Pushkin's? Who could have painted them?

A rich harvest

The exhibition was an unprecedented success. Its run was extended by almost a year. Irakly Andronikov also presented it in three hour-long programmes on television to great effect. 'I've long been convinced', he said, 'that television viewers, radio listeners and readers can sometimes solve problems and work out riddles that defeat the whole scientific community.' Indeed, after the broadcasts the museum and Andronikov received hundreds of letters of advice from viewers.

But it must be admitted that the most valuable opinions were received from specialists. The fact that the exhibition was open to a wide public by no means prevented its being studied by expert museologists and art critics. And the scientific 'harvest' turned out to be astonishingly rich. Here are a few examples.

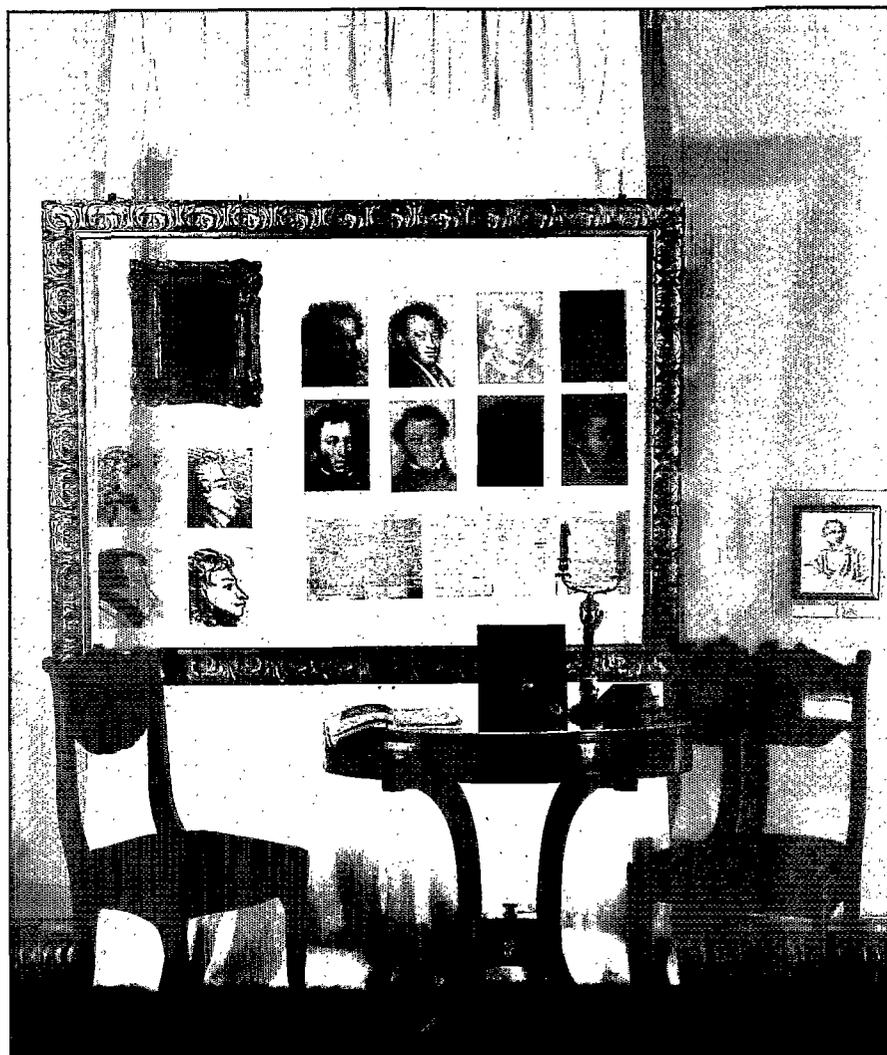


Photo by courtesy of the author

The staff of the Leo Tolstoy Museum 'recognized' in one of the portraits Tolstoy's grandfather – Prince Nikolai Sergeevich Volkonsky. Later, we passed the portrait over to them, and in exchange received an item we very much needed. A double portrait of the Baratynsky brothers, Evgeny and Sergey, was identified. The former was an outstanding poet, of whom Pushkin wrote: 'Baratynsky is a prodigy and a delight.' Sergey, the poet's brother, was a doctor and musician. A superlative watercolour by Pëtr Sokolov portrayed the Bludova sisters, contemporaries of Pushkin. An engraved portrait of a middle-aged woman, in a sumptuous leather travelling case, turned out to be of Elizaveta Vorontsova with whom, in her youth, Pushkin was madly in love.

Another portrait was identified as that of Ekaterina Ricci (née Lunina), a musician

Miniature portrait of Pushkin as a child (on table) and materials for comparison with portraits of the poet painted in his lifetime.

and singer well known to Pushkin. Her husband Ricci, an Italian singer, corresponded with Pushkin and translated his verses into Italian. An engraving showing three army officers was identified as the portrait of the Tarasov brothers – Aleksander, Vasily and Ivan. A meeting of the academic council of the museum was held to review the results of the exhibition, and in all, twelve attributions were confirmed!

Not museum workers alone

Meetings were arranged at the exhibition for staff from many other museums so that they could pool their experience in the matter of attributions. For this, we would repeat, is a very important facet of the activities of museums in all scientific disciplines. But alas, museums sometimes possess many hundreds of portraits, landscapes, genre paintings, and other *objets d'art* all of which were still awaiting scientific attribution. That's why it is so important that not only museum staff but also the widest possible circle of friends of the museums, the public and, of course, specialists should join forces to work on attributions. Television and the other mass media can play an invaluable role in this.

Who are they? Who are the figures in the age-darkened portraits in museums and private collections? In today's cultural atmosphere, when the human race is ever more closely scrutinizing its past, when the popularity of museums is growing, this question is of greater and greater interest. And the appeal being made by museums to the widest possible public to 'help us identify our exhibits' is a very timely one.

There is an enchanting poem by Pushkin written in 1828, called 'The Flower', which I shall quote in its entirety, though I am

aware that as a rule translation does not do justice to the artistic charm of an original. But this little jewel of a poem embodies the entire 'programme' of a museum's quest, and, although of course this was not the poet's intention, captures with some accuracy the poetry of museum work:

A little blossom, dried and scentless
Forgotten in this book I see
Already fancies, strange and
endless
Have filled my soul with mystery:
When did it bloom? What spring has
weathered?
Did it live long? Who plucked it?
Where?
By strange or by beknown hands
gathered?
Why then was it secreted here?
In memory of some tender meeting,
Or of a fateful parting made,
Or of some solitary outing
In quiet fields, or forest shade?
Does he still live, does she still linger?
Where now their narrow wayside
bower?
Or did they lose their hue, and
wither
And pass unknown like you,
poor flower?²

Does poetry need any commentary? ■

Notes

1. A. Krein, 'The Birth of a Museum', *Sovetskaya Rossiya* (Moscow), 1969; 'The Life of a Museum' *Sovetskaya Rossiya* (Moscow), 1979.
2. Translated by Walter May.

Professional news

'Thesaurus' – fine art information on computer

Thesaurus Auction Search Service is a sophisticated computerized information program which provides museums and other subscribers with an automated catalogue reading service. Initially, subscribers must specify their interests, and Thesaurus' staff construct a preliminary search profile, which is reviewed and refined during the first few weeks of the annual subscription. All catalogues are read by the computer and the software identifies items which match subscribers' interests. Should subscribers wish to amend their profile, Thesaurus will revise the search profiles to match the new search requirements.

Museums and other collectors receive daily reports of those items for sale which might be of interest to them. Thesaurus' comprehensive information provides complete coverage of subscribers' specialist subject area, whether paintings by an artist, golfing ephemera, or even bus tickets. There are still opportunities to establish new collections, despite the vast range of collectable items searched for by subscribers; in the United Kingdom, within a fortnight of Baroness Thatcher being replaced as leader of the Conservative party, one subscriber had begun to search for all Thatcher trivia.

The coverage of the Auction Search Service is being extended to provide comprehensive world information in 1993. At present the service provides access to 40 per cent of world information, covering auctions in the United Kingdom. Over 500 auction rooms supply catalogues to Thesaurus, sometimes as many as fifty per day. In all, details of nearly 3 million lots are captured each year. The service is of considerable interest to those wishing to search for stolen goods and heritage items which have been moved from

their countries without proper authorization. Trials are underway with the British police to establish a *modus operandi* which provides easy but confidential access to the information, and the French police have expressed interest for their own investigations.

Thesaurus database software was designed to perform full-text searches intelligently. Fully integrated operational software now runs an information factory which handles thousands of catalogues, twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. The key features of the software are *data capture* which yields well over 90 per cent clean text using ordinary scanning equipment, and *compression and search*, which permits data to be held on computers using one tenth of the normal storage capacity required for equivalent volumes of uncompressed data. The data can be searched extremely quickly: one million auction lots can be read in less than one second.

Thesaurus provides a dynamic search facility for museums, which ensures that all items which match specified acquisition policy requirements are identified and notified to the museum. In addition, museums which have had items stolen can have details of those missing items searched against auction information. The intelligent software enables museums' descriptions to be matched with the lot details, even though the terminology used by auctioneers may vary considerably from that used by the museum which has suffered the loss.

In February 1993, Thesaurus acquired at Sotheby's several thousand auction catalogues dating from 1836 to 1992. Primarily concerned with paintings, drawings and engravings, many of the catalogues include prices and buyers' names, thus forming a remarkable record of major sales from the first half of the nineteenth century to the present day.

The information will be loaded on to the Thesaurus database and will allow researchers to trace trends and fluctuations within the art market.

For further information: Thesaurus, 76 Gloucester Place, London W1H 4DQ (United Kingdom).
Tel: (44.(0)71) 487.34.01;
Fax: (44.(0)71) 487.42.11.

***Art Planète*: a video magazine for museums**

The first bimonthly international video magazine devoted to art exhibitions around the world has been launched in Paris. Entitled *Art Planète*, it aims at developing a network of audiovisual information for museums of contemporary art. The hour-long magazine is produced on video cassettes (interactive video discs will be introduced as the network expands) in all standard formats – PAL, SECAM and NTSC – and features subtitles rather than spoken commentary in order to be adaptable for use anywhere.

Participating museums provide *Art Planète* with slides well in advance of forthcoming exhibitions; these are transferred to videotape, thus allowing the magazine to present up-to-date information and serve as a timely communications link among museums. Some forty museums are currently taking part in the network.

In addition to producing a regular magazine, *Art Planète* assists museums in organizing interactive events: for example, a ten-minute video of a current exhibit may be recorded in one museum and a copy provided to another museum; a viewing is scheduled simultaneously in both museums which are linked by amplified telephones allowing the two audiences to dialogue with each other and with the exhibit organizers. This type of 'long-distance visit' has

proved far less costly to realize than a video conference by satellite.

Art Planète is studying the possibility of producing national and regional video magazines and will shortly begin preparing two new magazines for museums of science and of civilization.

For further information: Natan Karzmar, *Art Planète*, 119 rue des Pyrénées, 75020 Paris (France). Tel: (33.1) 43.79.84.21; Fax: (33.1) 43.79.79.93.

First Asia-Pacific Triennial

The Queensland Art Gallery in Brisbane (Australia) will host the first Asia-Pacific Triennial exhibition of contemporary art from 18 September to 5 December 1993; two further exhibitions are scheduled for 1996 and 1999.

The Triennial will feature more than seventy artists from twelve countries and Hong Kong, and will include almost 200 works in all media – painting, sculpture, printmaking, photography, performance and installation art; it will be complemented by an international conference, workshops and publications.

The final selection of artists for this inaugural exhibition was completed in December 1992 after a two-year selection process that has seen the Australian team visit every country included in the Triennial. The Queensland Art Gallery hopes that the event will become a major vehicle for promoting Asian, Pacific and Australasian art.

For further information: Asia-Pacific Triennial, Queensland Art Gallery, P.O. Box 3686, South Brisbane 4101, Queensland (Australia). Tel: (07) 840.73.33; Fax: (07) 844.88.65.

WFFM chronicle

World Federation of Friends of Museums, Via Goito 9, 20121 Milan, Italy

The Association of Friends of the Musée d'Orsay in Paris can point with pride to its accomplishments in enriching the museum's world-famous collections of nineteenth and early-twentieth-century art. Since its creation in 1980, the association has given more than 200 works to the museum, ranging from paintings, sculptures and drawings to photographs, architectural renderings, furniture and decorative objects.

Outstanding among these are a group of works by Degas, acquired from the

artist's family, drawings by Gauguin and Puvis de Chavannes, and a rare ceramic wall-panel from a Devonshire (England) castle, designed by William Morris and constructed by the ceramist William de Morgan in 1870.

A Friend of the Musée d'Orsay enjoys a number of privileges: free and priority access to all collections, guided tours and concerts, as well as to the exhibitions held at the Galeries Nationales du Grand Palais and the Palais du Luxembourg; special presentations of the museum's temporary exhibitions and free catalogues; organized travel to artistic sites and exhibits; and a privileged welcome upon arrival.

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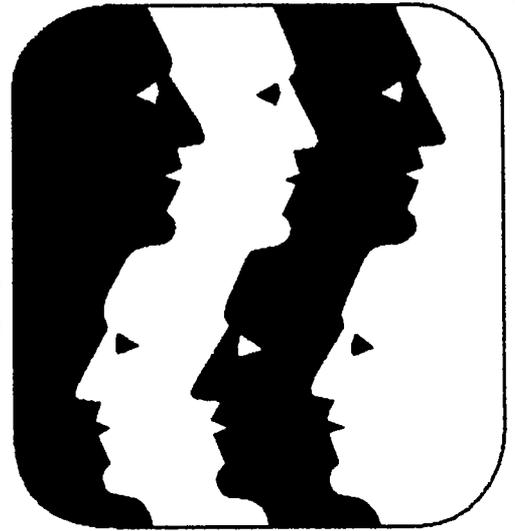
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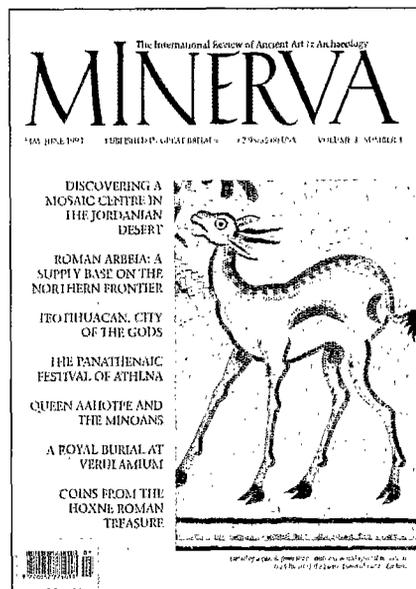
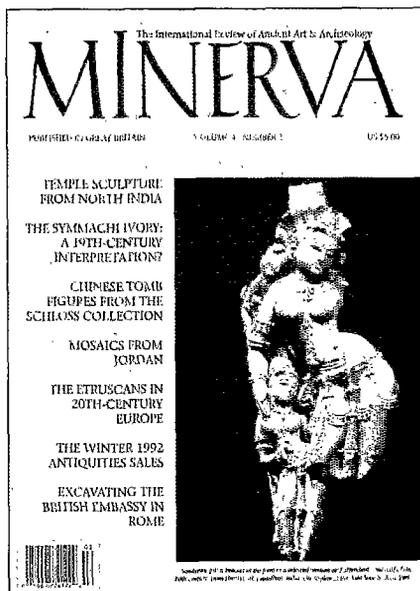
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Barrie Trinder is Senior Research Fellow at the Ironbridge Institute, a research and postgraduate teaching establishment under the joint auspices of the University of Birmingham and the Ironbridge Gorge Museum. He has studied industrial archaeology in many countries and has been involved with the International Committee on the Conservation of the Industrial Heritage (TICCIH) since its inception.

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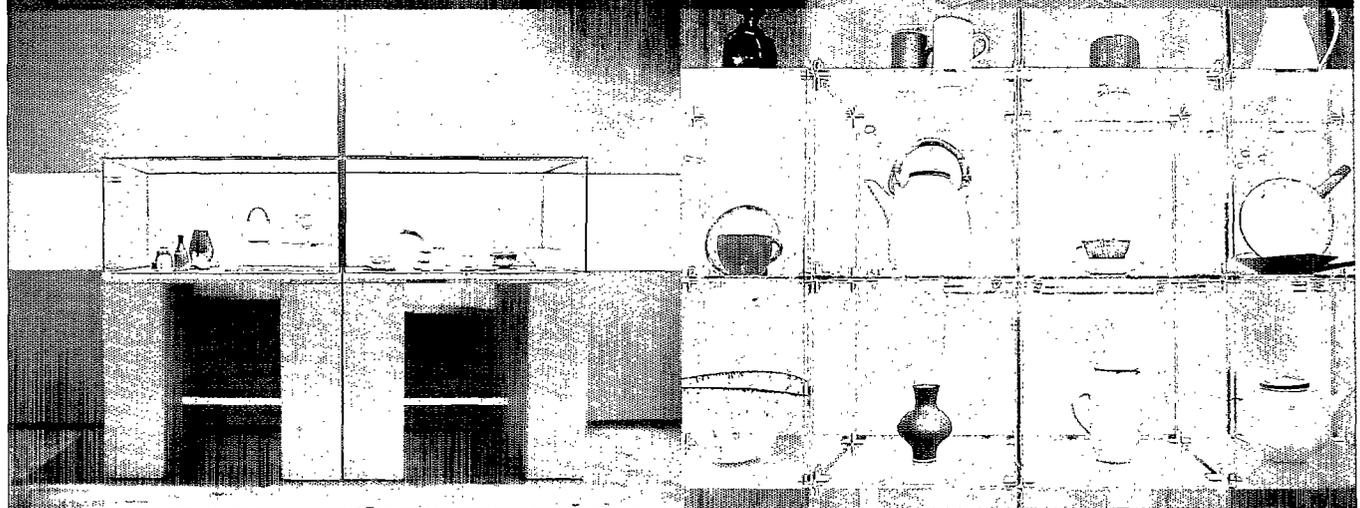
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