



Global Encounters: Fashion, Culture and Foreign Trade in Scandinavia, 1500-1630

The IEF project, titled 'Global Encounters: Fashion, Culture and Foreign Trade in Scandinavia, 1500-1630', carried out at the Danish National Research Foundation's Centre for Textile Research, University of Copenhagen, by the fellow Dr Paula Hohti, investigated how international trade and European tastes for fashionable goods changed Scandinavian cultures in the early modern period, 1500-1630. Using a wide range of methods from different disciplines, including art and cultural history, archaeology, anthropology, economic and social history, and fashion theory, it explored what economic, social and stylistic changes were introduced by foreign imports into the local Scandinavian cultures, how the lives of individuals were visually transformed by novel cultural concepts, and, eventually, what constituted Scandinavian fashions in the early modern period.

In the course of the research in historical archives in Finland and Sweden, the fellow Dr Hohti identified and discovered a number of important visual sources and documents, including wardrobe inventories, commercial letters, trade records and account books, that provided new knowledge about fashion and cross-cultural exchanges in Scandinavia in the period 1500-1630. These documents have allowed her to demonstrate that Scandinavian area along the Baltic trade route was culturally much less isolated than some of the current scholarship has assumed. Foreign fabrics and clothing products were imported to the Scandinavian towns of Copenhagen, Malmö, Stockholm and Turku from diverse European geographical areas, e.g. England, Flanders, Germany, Spain and Italy. These included novelties and new fashion accessories such as knitted hats and luxury fabrics that were ordered for weddings and other festive occasions. Finnish, Swedish and Danish noble families had also direct contacts and contracts with great European merchants, which meant that Scandinavians could also get hold of non-European goods that had arrived in Europe through the international ports in Venice, Genoa, Lisbon and Spain. The results of the Marie Curie fellowship research were shared through a number of publications and academic papers, given in international conferences in museums and universities, such as the National Museum of Denmark, the European University in Florence, Bard Graduate College in New York, Museum of Applied Arts in Vienna and the Centre for Fashion Studies in Stockholm. These scholarly lectures have enabled the fellow Dr Hohti to contribute to the ongoing debates concerning economic, social and cultural change in early modern Europe. As a result, the fellow was invited to contribute to important international publications of the field, including the forthcoming collection of essays *Luxury and the Ethics of Greed in the Early Modern World*, ed. by Catherine Kovesi, to appear in 2016, and The Bloomsbury Cultural History Series *Cultural History of the Home: The Renaissance, 1450-1650* (ed. by Amanda J. Flather, 2016).

New methods in early modern textile and dress history

One of the central goals of the project was also to develop a new methodology merging theoretical and practical approaches to early modern European textile and fashion research. During the Intra-European fellowship, the fellow combined her previous art historical training and theoretical and empirical approach with new practical work in textile artefacts through museum work, experimental archaeology, scientific analyses and the study of textile techniques. As part of the training, the fellow undertook several courses on historical textiles and textile technologies, for example, at the Textile Research Centre in Leiden, the Istituto Lisio in Florence, and the experimental research centre at Lejre, Denmark, learning how historical textiles were actually made and dyed, and what kind of stages were involved in the processes of production in the early modern period. The fellow's strong focus in dress and textile research at both scientific and experimental levels resulted in several workshops that were created and convened in collaboration with several museum curators and university scholars in Europe and the US. In November, 2014, for example, the fellow organised a workshop at the Centre of Textile Research at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Ratti Textile Research in New York, where the research centre's fellows were introduced to the methods of conservation, research and textile storage systems of the museum. During the same research trip, the fellow also chaired a lecture on new methods in textile research at Bard Graduate Centre, New York.

This framework of dress and textile research at both scientific and experimental levels led to more comprehensive questions about the interpretation of the value, origins and stylistic variations associated with dress and textile items. However, at the same time, it complicated the question of what does it actually mean, methodologically, for a historian to integrate these experiments in early modern research. This aspect was explored in February 2015 in the workshop 'Experimental Archaeology and Early Modern History', organised by the fellow in collaboration with her colleague, the archaeologist Dr Eva Andersson Strand. The aim was to investigate differences between experimental and experience research, and to evaluate how these can be applied in historical textile research. This approach will be strengthened at Aalto University, School of Arts, Design and Architecture, where the fellow was recruited immediately after her IEF in Spring 2015.



Research management training

In order to give the fellow the opportunity to gain experience of building up and directing her own research group, the host institution CTR gave additional funding of 100.000 DKK for the fellow to set up the research programme *Clothing, Costume, Consumption and Culture* (CCCC), run between the University of Copenhagen and the National Museum of Denmark. As the leader of the research programme, the fellow was responsible for five Ph.D. students and a large network of established interdisciplinary, international academic researchers and museum curators. The international partners were Warwick University, Glasgow University, UK, and the Europe University in Florence. Within this research programme the fellow organised and convened in collaboration with the doctoral students and international partners two workshops and a conference, held at the University of Copenhagen, the Museum of Copenhagen, the National Museum of Denmark and at the Global History Centre, University of Warwick. These events addressed issues of global trade of textile and clothing, and the key-note speakers included leading scholars of the field, Prof. Giorgio Riello and Prof. John Styles.

MA-level course 'Dress and Fashion in Early Modern Europe'

As part of the training and research of the Marie Curie mobility fellowship, the fellow also designed and taught a one-semester course, 'Dress and Fashion in Early Modern Europe' at the University of Copenhagen. The goal of the course, taught in English, was to provide the students not only with new knowledge about historical dress, but also about how historical knowledge is being created in different academic fields. The range of topics were explored from various points of view by inviting guest lecturers from the fields of archaeology, art and cultural history, social and economic history and museum conservation. As a result, the course gave the students a new interdisciplinary 'tool kit' how to study historical dress, textiles and fashion.

The blog 'Global Encounters'

An important objective of this fellowship was to disseminate knowledge about academic research outside academia. The fellow approached and fulfilled this objective in a very successful and innovative way by creating a research blog which offered a global readership the possibility to follow her ongoing research live, following the creative path of intellectual work and the choices that were made. The blog was a powerful and useful tool to communicate and publish the results immediately to an audience of so far over 9000 followers.

The two-year fellowship of Dr. Hohti at the CTR has completed the postdoctoral stage of her career, since she was recruited in a tenured position of Professor of Art and Culture History at the Aalto University, School of Arts, Design and Architecture, Helsinki.

Project websites:

Cccc: http://ctr.hum.ku.dk/costumes_clothing_consumption_culture/

Project: http://ctr.hum.ku.dk/costumes_clothing_consumption_culture/global_encounters/

Dr. Hohti <http://ctr.hum.ku.dk/people/staff-list/?pure=en/persons/445564>