

Fleece to Fashion
Economies and Cultures of Knitting in Modern Scotland

Curators' Colloquium on Knitted Textiles

Friday 29 January 2021
1.30 - 4.00 pm on Zoom

PROGRAMME

1.30 **Welcome and Introduction** (Lynn Abrams, Carol Christiansen)

1.40-2.30 **Acquisition, Identity and Interpretation**

Chair: Roslyn Chapman

The Challenges of a 'Living' Knitwear Collection (Carol Christiansen, Shetland Museum and Archives)

Scottish and European Knitted Textiles at National Museums Scotland: collecting, interpretation and display' (Helen Wyld, National Museums of Scotland)

2.30-3.00 **Care and Conservation**

Chair: Sally Tuckett

The Care and conservation of Knit Collections (Frances Lennard, University of Glasgow)

3.00-3.05 Leg stretch

3.05-3.50 **Interpretation and Display – Conventional and Digital**

Chair: Lin Gardner

Colour Revolution: Bernat Klein and the post-war market for handknitting (Lisa Mason, National Museum of Scotland)

Glorious Ganseys: a glance at the Scottish Fisheries Museum's collection of fishermen's jumpers with particular focus "Knitting the Herring" and the creation of a National Database (Jen Gordon and Federica Papiccio, Scottish Fisheries Museum)

3.50-4.00 **Summing Up and Next Steps**

Chair: Marina Moskowitz

Speaker Biographies

Carol Christiansen is Curator and Community Museums Officer at Shetland Museum and Archives. As curator, her main responsibility is the Museum's nationally recognised textiles collection, which has a large knitted textile component. She holds a PhD from the University of Manchester in Archaeology with a specialisation in Textiles and has worked and published in the specialism with colleagues in the UK and Nordic countries. She is the author of *Taatit Rugs: the pile bedcovers of Shetland* (2015) and numerous articles on Shetland's textile heritage. Currently she is leading a project to record and assess the Museum's knitted lace collection and is preparing a publication on Shetland knitted lace design. Her related research focuses on indigenous sheep breeds and fleece development, ethnographic and historic research on wool production, processing, spinning, dyeing and textile making in the North Atlantic and Nordic regions.

Jen Gordon has worked at the Scottish Fisheries Museum for a long time but in recent years has focused on Engagement with the Collections rather than Collections Management. Jen is a fan of social and local history which she is lucky enough to legitimately indulge in through research, exhibitions, events and the museum's enquiry service. Having received many queries about the museum's costume collection and found costume exhibitions to be popular with visitors, she collated her own plus exiting in-house research to produce the booklet *Threads: A Guide to the Clothing of Scottish Fisherfolk*. Jen holds great affection for the East Neuk landscape and its inhabitants and tending towards the nostalgic, is determined to support the continuation (now post-Pandemic revival??) of Old School events like Coffee Mornings and Illustrated Talks as well as more future-conscious collaborations with artists, musicians, designers and community/environmental groups through her museum work and with her volunteering for the Anstruther Improvements Association. She is a terrible knitter, has a loose grasp on the technical side of identifying/analysing textiles and has low confidence in using I.T.

Frances Lennard is Professor of Textile Conservation at the University of Glasgow, and led the University's Centre for Textile Conservation and Technical Art History until 2020. She trained and worked as a textile conservator for 20 years before moving to the academic sphere and becoming the convenor of the postgraduate textile conservation programme at the University of Southampton and then in Glasgow. She has led major research programmes into the assessment and conservation of woven tapestry and the interdisciplinary investigation of Pacific barkcloth. She is the editor of volumes on tapestry and textile conservation and Pacific barkcloth. She is a keen knitter.

Lisa Mason is Assistant Curator within the Art & Design department at National Museums Scotland, Trustee of the Bernat Klein Foundation, and Membership Secretary of the Dress and Textile Specialists. Her research interests include twentieth century tapestry, post-war design in Britain, artist textiles, and design archives. Lisa studied textile design at Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art & Design, the University of Dundee and History of Art at the University of Edinburgh. Lisa is currently working on a project funded by the Art Fund to collect modernist textiles for the permanent collection at National Museums Scotland and a major retrospective exhibition of tapestry artist Archie Brennan, which will open at Dovecot Studios in March 2021. During her time at National Museums Scotland Lisa worked on a Heritage Lottery funded capital project to develop four Art & Design galleries and the Bernat Klein Project, which was generously funded by the Clothworkers Foundation. Prior to joining National Museums Scotland Lisa worked on various curatorial projects with Dundee University Museum Services, the Talbot Rice Gallery and the National Galleries of Scotland.

Federica Papiccio holds a BA in Illustration and Animation from the European Institute of Design in Rome and an MLitt in Museum and Gallery Studies from the University of St Andrews. She is also an interdisciplinary PhD candidate in Art History and Computer Science at St Andrews, where she is exploring the potential of user-generated content to maximise the use of museum collections and enhance their significance. She has held various posts in the cultural heritage sector, and she is

currently working in collections-based roles at the Scottish Fisheries Museum and at HMS Unicorn in Dundee. At the Fisheries, she is co-managing 'Knitting the Herring', Scotland's national gansey project, whilst at HMS Unicorn, she looks after the collections, including the ship's uniform collection. When she is not working, you will find her reading, playing her ukulele, watching long movie-marathons or, of course, brewing never-ending cups of green tea.

Helen Wyld is Senior Curator of Historic Textiles at National Museums Scotland, where she is responsible for European textiles and dress from the medieval period to 1850. She studied History of Art at the Courtauld Institute of Art, London, and after early career Assistant Curator roles at the National Trust and National Portrait Gallery, her interest in and knowledge of tapestry was nurtured via a three-year Paul Mellon Centre fellowship as Tapestry Research Curator with the Trust (2010-2013). A fellowship year at the Metropolitan Museum of Art courtesy of the Sylvan C and Pamela Coleman Memorial Fund was followed by a period as Curator with National Trust for Scotland before joining National Museums Scotland in 2017. Helen is currently undertaking part-time doctoral research at the University of Edinburgh on 'Textiles and Ritual at the Court of Charles I'. Other research interests include Renaissance jewels, Jacobite visual culture, ecclesiastical textiles, Scottish linen damask, and early modern domestic embroidery.

The **Fleece to Fashion Team** comprises:

Lynn Abrams is Professor of Modern History at the University of Glasgow and lead investigator for the 'Fleece to Fashion' project. Her research ranges across modern gender, social and oral histories. Until now her textile-focused research has largely been based in Shetland, published in *Myth and Materiality in a Woman's World: Shetland 1800-2000* (2005) and in articles in *Textile History*, *Gender & History* and *Signs*. With Marina Moskowitz she was responsible for two knit-focused projects including 'Knitting-in-the-Round' which employed a knitter-in-residence and a project on authenticity in knitted lace which recruited amateur knitters to undertake practice-based research.

Roslyn Chapman is a research associate on the Fleece to Fashion Project at the University of Glasgow. Her PhD thesis was on the History of the Shetland lace knitting industry in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century and although she has researched knitted textiles in other regions, her focus has remained on Shetland. She has recently collaborated with Dr Carol Christiansen, textile curator at Shetland Museum and Archives on the RSE funded Nottingham Shetland lace project, and the AHRC funded Digitisation Strategy for Shetland Museum's Recognised Textile Collection.

Lin Gardner is a post-doctoral research assistant for the project. She recently completed an AHRC-CDA funded PhD titled, '*Mechanising the Needle: The development of the sewing machine as a manufacturing tool, 1851-1980*'. Her research used both archival sources and material culture to explore the impact of stitched object construction and human tacit skill on the development of mechanised production. Lin initially trained as a woven textile designer at the Glasgow School of Art. And after a short time working in the Scottish woollen industry, she was a professional costume maker for theatre, film and television.

Marina Moskowitz is the Lynn and Gary Mecklenburg Chair in Textiles, Material Culture, and Design, in the Design Studies Department at the University of Madison-Wisconsin in the US, a position which is attached to the wonderful resource of The Helen Louise Allen Textile Collection with over 13,000 textile artifacts spanning 16 centuries and 108 countries. Her research focuses on the cultural history of the modern United States with a focus on textiles and design but after some years working at the University of Glasgow, she developed an interest in Scottish knitted textiles. Marina is the co-editor of *Textile History*.

Sally Tuckett is a lecturer in dress and textile history at the University of Glasgow. Her research ranges across the 18th and 19th century with a particular focus on Scotland. She was the researcher on ‘Artisans and the Craft Economy in Scotland’, at the University of Edinburgh, from 2013-2014, focusing on the Ayrshire whitework industry and Scottish handloom weavers. Prior to this, she was the researcher on ‘Colouring the Nation’, a two-year collaborative project between the University of Edinburgh and National Museums Scotland. She has published on turkey red, whitework, tartan and is currently researching textiles in the Atlantic slave trade.

Fleece to Fashion website:

<https://www.gla.ac.uk/schools/humanities/research/historyresearch/researchprojects/fleece/>

Fleece to Fashion on Twitter:

[@UofGKnitting](https://twitter.com/UofGKnitting)