

## Touch, Textile, Technology: Collaboration across Europe

**Date :** July 10, 2007

*One day Symposium Friday 14th September 2007.*

We will be hosting a one day symposium on Friday 14th September 2007. Its starting point is to explore how people involved in textile making are involved in practice based research teams across art, science and technology. We will focus on collaboration between artists, museologists and technologists and their relationship to textiles, touch and technology.

*Click below for details*

Such collaborations have a variety of outputs, including new forms of electronic communication, interactive databases and art works that are framed within a number of different environments. Museums have provided a range of interactive display that rely on computer technology but how do interactive works that mobilise touch, shape the visitors experience? What are the processes of collaboration involved? How does an engagement with technology affect the quality of audience experience? How are all the senses deployed within multi-modal environments and haptic textiles? What are the issues in IP and technology transfer? How do these issues affect practice based research and team work?

### Programme:

Registration, including coffee: 9.00-9.30am

The Small Cinema - Richard Hoggart Building

9.45-10.00am

Introduction: Professor Janis Jefferies

Janis Jefferies is Professor of Visual Arts at Goldsmiths, University of London, artist, writer and curator with particular interests in digital art and sound, the relationship between text, textiles, technology and access to cultural artefacts through touch and sound. She is Artistic Director of Goldsmiths Digital Studios and Director of the Constance Howard Resource and Research Centre in Textiles. She is currently project manager for NESTA for activities that include on-line learning resources.

Goldsmiths Digital Studios is dedicated to collaborations among practicing artists, cultural and media theorists, and innovators in computational media. Sited both at Goldsmiths and at the BT Research Laboratories in Martlesham Suffolk, ongoing projects include: developments of new forms of interactive digital moving images (partners include Cambridge University, BT, and Tate Modern), algorithms for music segmentation and analysis, retrieval of musical information (with Queen Mary), development of Haptic (touch) interfaces for artistic creation and access to artefacts (with MIT), and investigations of the second generation of Broadband

The Constance Howard Resource and Research Centre in Textiles is dedicated to the research and study of textiles within a broader context of visual and material culture. It has over 4,000 pieces of textile, some very special commissioned teaching samples, Japanese techno-fabrics, early example of stump work and tiny fragments of lace and embroidery.

10.00-10.45am

**Session 1: Touch, Textile, Technology: Collaborative Practice**

Keynote Speaker: Dr. Zane Berzina

Moderator: David Littler

Touch, Textile, Technology: Collaborative Practice

Dr. Zane Berzina: Artist, designer and researcher, Dr Zane Berzina, originally from Latvia, is involved in interdisciplinary projects across the fields of science, technology, design and the arts. Her practice and research evolves around responsive, active and interactive textiles, new materials, processes and technologies as well as biomimetic practices. In 2005, Zane completed a practice-based Ph.D. 'Skin Stories: Charting and Mapping the Skin' at the University of the Arts, London using analogies of human skin in relation to her textile practice. Currently she is a Research Fellow at the Constance Howard Resource and Research Centre in Textiles, Goldsmiths, University of London and an Associate of the Goldsmiths Digital Studios.

David Littler: David is director of London Printworks Trust, a leading centre of innovation for textile print based visual arts and educational practice, located in the heart of Brixton, south London. He has worked with a diverse range of artists and organizations including Yinka Shonibare, Jonathan Saunders, Brixton Market Traders' Association and The Hayward Gallery. He is currently developing a solo project "Sampler" combining his dual passions - dj-ing and textiles.

10.45-11.30am

Two Case Studies.

Seamus McGinnis and Kevin Malone: The Silent Community, textile practice within the Institute of Psychiatry (University of Dublin)

Seamus McGinnis is an artist and currently a lecturer in Textiles GMIT, Galway, visiting lecturer in art colleges, at Kilkenny, Co. Cork, Lithuania, Bulgaria and London. Seamus has been selected for many public and corporate commissions as well as exhibited extensively, with solo and collaborative exhibitions internationally and throughout Europe.

Dr Kevin Malone was appointed to the chair of Psychiatry at St.Vincent's University Hospital, University College Dublin in September 2002. He graduated in medicine from the Royal College of Surgeons in 1984. He has authored and co-authored over 70 original research papers in international peer-reviewed scientific journals, and has contributed chapters to over 20 scientific textbooks. He is currently writing a book for the public about depression and other psychological disorders. He is an active Clinical investigator with the UCD Conway Institute for Biomolecular and Biomedical Research, as well as with the Dublin Molecular Medicine Centre, where collaborative studies are underway to investigate molecular genetic and brain imaging factors associated with Suicidal Depression. He is a member of the Scientific Advisory Board of the American Foundation for Suicidal Prevention, a Board member of the Irish Association of Suicidology, and a member of the European College of NeuroPsychopharmacology (ECNP). He has recently established the "Turning the Tide of Suicide (3TS) Foundation" which is dedicated to addressing the problem of suicide in modern Ireland through research, education and support.

This discursive collaboration is being conducted in the Department of Psychiatry and Mental Health Research Unit at St Vincent's Hospital, Dublin. As part fulfilment of a PhD in Suicide Studies under the joint supervision of Professor Kevin Malone, UCD and Professor Janis Jefferies, Goldsmiths, University of London. It is a unique collaboration between art and science.

The research is concerned with suicide and in particular young male suicide in contemporary Ireland. Suicide sits uncomfortably with the current international perception of economically successful Ireland. More young people die each year by suicide than by any other means. Young men are 3-4 times more likely to die in this way than young women.

This will inform a series of art works addressing suicide, utilizing personal textiles and artefacts belonging to the deceased and enriched by the spoken narrative, all of which have been donated by a 100 of the interviewed families.

We will be presenting preliminary findings, including a short DVD, articulating the possibilities and difficulties that present when disciplines interface outside the comfort zone of familiarity.

'Materials Library - a Haptic Emporium

Dr Mark Miodownik (Kings College) and Martin Conreen Design (Goldsmiths): Collaborations in Material Science. [www.materialslibrary.org.uk](http://www.materialslibrary.org.uk)

Dr Mark Miodownik is Head of the Materials Research Group, Kings College London and director of the Materials Library. He received his BA in Materials Science from St Catherine's College, Oxford in 1992, and his Ph.D in turbine jet engine alloys from Oxford University in 1996. His main research expertise is in self-healing materials and biological tissues. In 2001 he organised and chaired a talk series at the ICA on 'Aesthetics in the Arts and Sciences'. In 2003 he was awarded a NESTA fellowship to develop a Materials Library as an interactive space for designers, architects and artists to collaborate with materials scientists.

Martin Conreen is a lecturer in design. He received his BA from Goldsmiths in Fine Art/Sculpture in 1984. His interest in materials and making, led him to work in numerous design fields including furniture design, silver smithing, set building and shoe making to name but a few. Martin's research has focused on material culture, human behaviour and the role of objects in human relationships, as well as contemporary art, emerging materials and methods of production in art and design. He currently has an LCACE (London Centre for the Arts and Cultural Enterprise) funded project "What goes around comes around" to investigate the use of non-traditional snap fast materials (ecological and non-toxic) for rota-moulding proto-types.

The Material Library

Before the modern era, materials were developed by artists and crafts people, artisans, alchemists and dabblers largely through trial and error. The technical sophistication that can be achieved this way is impressive, as a visit to the British Museum amply illustrates.

Materials science is a fundamentally different approach: it is the use and development of theory (physics, chemistry, biology) to understand and develop new materials. Although Materials Science is a fundamentally multidisciplinary approach, one aspect of the subject unites everyone, the link between structure and material properties.

Whether it is macro-structure, micro-structure, nano-structure or atomic-structure: size matters, with each different structural scale presenting its own challenges. By understanding structure at the right scale you can control the corresponding properties such as colour, strength, smoothness, magnetism etc... Material scientists all spend a lot of time trying to observe, control and manipulate structure.

This approach is largely a 20th century innovation, and has yielded more new materials in 100 years than were developed in all previous history. There are hundreds of new materials produced

every year. Some seem mundane, such as new aluminium alloys for the car industry, and some miraculous such as silicon chips, glass that cleans itself, polymers that self-heal, transparent concrete, and digital paper.

Materials are gathered together not only for scientific interest, but for their ability to fire the imagination and advance conceptualisation. Our hypothesis is that not only do technical details enhance aesthetic experience but that in generating physical encounters with matter, one provides an often forgotten way into this technical knowledge.

The library is a physical archive of more than 500 new materials and is growing every month. We specialise in new and advanced prototype materials collected from research labs all round the world. The idea of the library is to provide an intellectual and sensual intersection between the arts and sciences. We are not trying to create a comprehensive materials collection, instead we are trying to create a thinking space.

11.30-11.45am short break.

### **Session 2: Museums and Interaction.**

11.45-12.30pm

Keynote Speaker: Dr. Tina Sherwell.

Moderator: Dr Nick Lambert, Birkbeck College, University of London.

Accessing collections through on-line database libraries of textile art and material culture.

Dr. Tina Sherwell is the Programme Leader for Fine Art at The Winchester School of Art, and she has worked on Arts and Humanities Council research which involved TATE Modern and their art media archives. She has written articles on Palestinian art and culture and worked with various Palestinian art and culture institutions over the last 10 years among which she was involved in the establishment of the Virtual Gallery at Birzeit University. She won an award at the Alexandria Biennale of 2001 for her maps of Palestine. She studied textiles at Goldsmiths before completing her Ph.D.

Dr. Nicholas Lambert is technical director of the AHRC Archival Project at the School of Architecture and the Built Environment, University of Westminster and Research Office on the CACHE Project at the School of History and Art, Film and Visual Media, Birkbeck, University of London. He has particular expertise in British computer-based art works from 1960s -1980s and is co-editor of " White Heat and Cold Logic: British Computer Art 1960-1980", MIT Press, 2007.

12.30-1.15pm

Two case studies

The Loom Project: Approaches to Weaving Narrative Threads A project by Alinah Azadeh, artist. Textile and system in collaboration with Jon Bird, (University of Sussex) and ASF Weave.

[www.loomproject.com](http://www.loomproject.com)

Alinah Azadeh is a British-Iranian artist based in the UK who uses installation, film, digital media and textiles to develop hybrid artworks that seek to engage audiences in a process of self-reflection and intimate emotional connection with each other. Since her MA in Media Arts Practice at Westminster University in 2001, she has worked with processes such as cooking, weaving and talking to poetically subvert the way we view the function of the everyday. Collaboration and live participation are central to her work, both with experts of other disciplines and the audience itself.

Jon Bird is a Research Fellow in the Centre for Computational Neuroscience and Robotics at the University of Sussex. He does artificial life research that focuses on the modelling of adaptive behaviour using computer simulations and robots. He is currently working on the multi-disciplinary Drawbots project which is exploring creativity by building robots that can draw. Applying his research across disciplines, he has published several papers that simultaneously consider both the artistic and scientific potential of emergent and evolutionary systems. He is a co-founder of Blip, a Brighton-based arts-science forum.

Kathleen Mullaniff, Jennifer Wright, Jane Langley.

Pattern Lab: [www.thepatternlab.com](http://www.thepatternlab.com)

Kathleen Mullaniff, Jennifer Wright and Jane Langley have been collaborating and curating exhibitions related to textiles since 2000, enabling artists to explore and interpret both historical and contemporary textile collections and archives. They have now formed The Pattern Lab. Working with textiles has shown that everything is connected and The Pattern Lab will be continuing to develop ideas relating to this expanded field, including science, history and society. Projects have included Loop and Spin working with the V& A and Bankfield Museum, Halifax.

Jane Langley makes paintings that reference textiles; in particular stitch and weave. She revisits the motifs and styles found in a range of textiles, from stitched samplers made by children and fabrics designed for the Festival of Britain in the fifties, to 18th Century silk brocades and 1970's 'abstract' samplers. She also embroiders her own improvised samplers. All this material is transformed into sequences of paintings that merge 'decoration' with narratives that unfold in a reconstructed illusory space.

Jennifer Wright uses constructed plastics, digital print on textiles, vinyl, and embroidery to produce work exploring relationships between contemporary fine art practice, the structures, perception of time/duration and acts of making, experienced within the domestic day and technologies within the home. Her recent installations invite the viewer into interiors within which information from the outside world has been filtered and transformed through the everyday code of the embroidery chart. Photographic images of exterior views taken from within interior spaces, form the basis for a process of encryption and retranslation. These are rendered, initially as digitally printed, vinyl panels of colour-coded squares, akin to video pixels, which cover the windows of the installation space.

Interested in complex relationships between 'hand-laboured' and technologically accelerated means of production she 'relays' this information as through the space of a 'computer vitrine', the viewer witnessing the signal becoming image. On the floor lay 'Rococo rugs', made from thousands of luminous, plastic beads, whilst on the walls multi-panelled images combining embroidery and photography, are interwoven with the narrative potential of a future landscape and supersaturated with colour. The images appearing to be in a constant state of evolution, as might resemble the corrupt frames of a DVD.

Jennifer Wright is part of the Contemporary Fine Art Research Group (CFAR) at Birmingham Institute of Art and Design (UCE) and a Senior Lecturer in the Fine Art Department.

Kathleen Mullaniff trained at Camberwell School of Arts and Crafts gaining a BA Fine Art (Painting) and University of London Goldsmiths MA Fine Art. Kathleen writes: Since 1994 I have used various pictorial means within my painting practice to map and record the decorative. My starting points

have been varied and have encompassed the use of decorative printed fabric, photographic imagery and illustrated floral imagery. It is my intention to investigate the idea of home as a place laden with memory and cultural identity. The ongoing question is one of interpretation, the aim being to render the source material in a poetical pictorial form. Fine Art Practice has placed a question mark over the applied and decorative arts, viewing them from a cultural distance. I endeavour to address in my practice pictorial methods that make a contemporary comment on past histories. She has exhibited in Painting as a Foreign Language at Cultura Inglesa Sao Paulo. Fabric Reinterpreting the House at Abbott Hall Art Gallery. Loop at Bankfield Museum, Showhouse: at PM Gallery and House. In 2004 she participated in Purl at The Museum of Domestic Design and Architecture where three UK artists and three artists from the USA used the textile archive to make original works.

Kathleen is Senior Lecturer in Fine Art at Middlesex University.

Lunch 01.15-02.45pm

Lunch provided in the Constance Howard Resource and Research Centre in Textiles.

### **Session 3: Intellectual Property and Technology Transfer:**

Case studies

02.45-04.00pm

Moderator: Rebecca Maguire

Marrice Cumber, Director Own It

Paul Carlyle, Partner, Commercial Division, Media and Technology Shepherd and Wedderburn LLP.

Rebecca Maguire is a Cultural Development Manager at Goldsmiths, University of London, working within the Office for Business Development and responsible to London Centre for Arts and Cultural Enterprise (LCACE) - a collaborative project between seven London universities. The office develops consultancy, showcasing and commercial relationships between Goldsmiths and industry, the voluntary sector and government, working with academics and practitioners from all departments.

Marrice Cumber, director of Own It, [www.own-it.org](http://www.own-it.org), Creative London Intellectual Property Service. Free advice, events and information for London's creative people on: Copyright, Design Rights, Patents, Trademarks, Branding, Confidentiality Agreements, Licensing, Royalties, Contracts.

Embroidery Pirates and Fashion Victims: Textiles and Anti-Copyright Activism

Kirsty Robertson is currently a postdoctoral fellow at the Constance Howard Research Centre in Textiles at Goldsmiths, University of London, England. Kirsty Robertson's postdoctoral work focuses on the study of wearable technologies, immersive environments and the potential overlap(s) between textiles and technologies. She considers these issues within the framework of globalization, activism, and burgeoning "creative economies." Kirsty recently completed her Ph.D. in Visual and Material cultures at Queen's University in Canada in August, 2006. Her dissertation focused on global justice activism and visual culture.

Debates over copyright within crafting communities are particularly thorny, jumping as they do from notions of a common shared history that should be open and welcoming to all, passing through the idea that as an apparently gendered pastime crafting is regularly devalued - something its

practitioners should work against, to more recent arguments that there are lucrative opportunities for professional crafters and designers that need to be protected through the copyrighting, patenting and trademarking of designs and processes. These debates have produced two further competing interpretations of the role(s) played by craft in a contemporary setting. The first can be described as a reaction against copyright and trademarking, coupled with frequent misunderstandings of how copyright is used by designers, and fears that what is most pleasurable about crafting is threatened by tighter controls and surveillance. On a second, and often hidden, level, professional craftworkers face not only stigma within the community for protecting their designs, but are also frequently targeted by multinational companies who are able to "steal" their designs and mass produce them without fear of repercussion from the much smaller (and generally poorer) practitioners and designers. From the activist KNITTA graffiti knitters and trademark-busters Microrevolt, to the so-called "embroidery pirates" and swiftly organized coalitions both for and against copyright, and ranging from recent World Trade Organization legislation affecting textiles, through a comparison with the very different approach to copyright in the fashion industry, this paper examines some of these issues, focusing particularly on some of the creative responses to copyright and to copyright infringement.

04.00: Conclusion

4.30-6.00pm: Reception (drinks and nibbles) and Poster Session and video projections in the Constance Howard Resource and Research Centre in Textiles.

The Small Cinema - Richard Hoggart Building

6.15pm, The Man in the White Suit

Introduction: Mark Miodownik.

Showing of the 1951 film, The Man in the White Suit which is a comedy about textiles and technology starring Alec Guinness. A strong fibre is invented. It repels the dirt and never wears out. What happens to the white suit as it glows?

### **Publication**

Deadline for submitting manuscripts, around the issues of Touch, Textile and Technology, for publication: December 1, 2007. All papers will be sent for peer review and considered for inclusion in a special issue of Textile; Journal of Cloth and Culture. If a full-length manuscript is not submitted by this date, the speaker's 200-word abstract may be printed instead. Guidelines for submission will be sent with paper acceptance.

### **Registration**

Early Bird registration prior to April 1st 2007.

Friends of Constance Howard Resource and Research Centre in Textiles: £55.00

Members of ETN:£55.00

Non members: £65.00

Students: £30.00

Full registration, closing date August 1st 2007

Friends of Constance Howard Resource and Research Centre in Textiles: £70.00

Members of ETN : £70.00

Non members: £80.00

Students: £40.00

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