Scientific Report
Highlights 2023

By: Eva Andersson Strand and Emil Theodor Hansen

Introduction

The Centre for Textile Research (CTR) was established in 2005, founded by the Danish National Research Foundation and is today a research centre at the Saxo Institute, University of Copenhagen.

Since its inception, the CTR has had a strong focus on textile history and archaeology based on substantial research programs, as well as research training of young scholars and a variety of activities connected with textile history involving universities, museums and design schools. The CTR organizes seminars, conferences and courses in textile history on all academic levels.

The scientific missions of the CTR are to:
- Promote, expand and consolidate textile research in the academic world;
- Establish a visible and explicit research profile with national and international references, setting new standards for future textile research;
- Explore and consolidate international textile knowledge;
- Achieve new results by conducting scientific programs in new research fields, and by inspiring all scientists to include the area of textiles in their research.

CTR Management

Since 2017 the CTR leader is senior associated professor Eva Andersson Strand. In 2023, Eva Andersson Strand together with Susanne Lervad, and Dr Rachele Pierini forms the CTR management group.

CTR team meetings were held every second Wednesday throughout the year, including internal and external scientific lectures and presentations by team members and guest researchers.
Trip To Cambodia: Exploring Cambodia’s Textiles and Craft

Several of the CTR researchers joined the CTR textile study tour in January 2023, to explore and study the amazing heritage of textile craft in Cambodian culture. Our team was privileged by many different and competent guides, curators, researchers and many more welcoming Cambodians, who gave us an unique insight into the crafts and collections of Cambodian textiles.

The trip commenced with a tour of the National Museum of Cambodia, along with the Royal Palace of Cambodia, Royal University of Fine Arts, “Silk Island” and many silk and textile workshops.

We have had a fantastic time and learned so much. We warmly thank all the amazing and skilled crafts people we have met for their generosity to share their knowledge with us. We also kindly thank all colleagues at the university in Phnom Penh and the museums we visited. Finally we thank our tour guides Channak and Narin for introducing us to Cambodia and of course CTRs own textile guide Kerstin Andersson.

Read about the trip in full at: https://www.traditionaltextilecraft.dk/post/exploring-cambodia-s-textiles-and-craft-a-ctr-textile-study-tour
CTR Summer School—Dressing the World

CTR held the summer school “Dressing the World—Theory and Practice through 2000 years” (14-25 August 2023), with Eva Andersson Strand, Marie-Louise Nosch and Marie Riegels Melchior, as well as with outstanding help from many of the CTR people. The course was aimed at BA and MA student, who would be merited 15 ECTS, and consisted of various modules concerning theories on cultural, historical, archaeological and ethnological fields.

The students also got to visit Sagnlandet Lejre, where they tried with spinning. They also got the possibility for a hands-on use of a loom.

Some of the learning outcomes were:

- Knowledge of historical dimensions to textile and fashion production
- In depth understanding of interdisciplinary textile and fashion theories
- A hands-on approach to various textile techniques

Conference: Dyes in History and Archaeology (DHA42)

On October 31st until November 3rd CTR organised the annual Dyes in History and Archaeology conference in Copenhagen, organised in collaboration with the National Museum of Denmark, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, the Royal Danish Academy and the University of Copenhagen.

The aim of the conference was to bring specialists together to delve deeply into the history, production, application, and properties of organic colourants, as well as analytical characterization and identification. The first three days were dedicated to presentations held at both the University of Copenhagen and at the Royal Danish Academy. On the final day, conference attendees had the opportunity to participate in guided tours to the National Museum of Denmark, The Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Rosenborg Castle, and David’s Collection.

Read more at: https://conferencemanager.events/dyesinhistoryandarchaeology/

Photo from after the final talk of all the participants. Photo: Emil Th. Hansen

Ulla Mannering is giving a talk about dye analyses of textiles from Hedeby. Photo: Emil Th. Hansen
Eva Andersson Strand is appointed Professor of Archaeology

Eva Andersson Strand, director of the Centre for Textile Research, can now, as of 1 October, officially hold the title of professor of archaeology. Her appointment marks a strengthening of the field of archaeology at the Saxo Institute and at the University of Copenhagen, where she will continue to play a leading role in the interdisciplinary collaboration within the UCPH School of Archaeology.

She shares her thoughts on the appointment:

- It is the most exciting and, at the same time, challenging task I have received in academic life. We at the Saxo Institute have enormous potential in both classical and prehistoric archaeology and leading research in several areas. My hope and goal are that, together with my colleagues at the institute, we get the opportunity to make this more visible and create new and better conditions for archaeology in general, both in terms of research but also teaching.

Online Exhibition: Archaeological Puzzles in a Museum

This is a presentation of the result of the collective works within the RECONTEXT research project entitled “Reconstructing the history of Egyptian textiles from the 1st Millennium AD at the National Museum of Denmark”. The project was funded by two Danish foundations – Aage og Johanne Louis-Hansens Fond and Beckett-Fonden – and was led in 2021-2022 by Maria Mossakowska-Gaubert. RECONTEXT was conducted in close collaboration with the National Museum of Denmark.

The National Museum of Denmark houses 112 textile fragments from Roman, Byzantine, and Early Medieval Arab Egypt, comprising the richest ensemble in Denmark. The aim of the online exhibition “Archaeological Puzzles in a Museum” is to give an insight into the history of the collection and the textiles therein.

CTR as an institution as well as the individual researchers collaborate with a large number of universities and other external institutions.

During 2023, the CTR team organised 50 workshops, meetings and conferences, and gave 29 presentations primarily in international contexts. The CTR scholars participated in 32 different research projects during 2023, collaborative or individual, national and international, such as:

In 2023, Eva Andersson Strand, Ulla Mannering, Charlotte Rimstad, Ida Demant, Irene Skals and Mads Lou Bandtsen finished their project “Fashioning the Viking age” with various publications. Maria Mossakowska-Gaubert finished the project “RECONTEXT: Reconstructing the history of Egyptian textiles from the 1st Millenium AD at the National Museum of Denmark” with the aforementioned online exhibition.

Still running are Save the Loom project, led by Eva Andersson Strand with Susanne Lervad and Kathrine Brandstrup, Fashioning Sudan Project with PI Elsa Yvanez, and the Textile Resources in Viking age Landscapes project (TRiVaL), with Eva Andersson Strand, Ulla Mannering, Charlotte Rimstad, Ph.D. Fellow Jonas Holm Jæger and student assistant Camilla Fraas Rasmussen.

Furthermore, Morten Grymer-Hansen with Susanne Lervad and Elsa Yvanez (as PIs) are starting a project on Silk Ribbons in Museum Amager, in collaboration with said museum.

The CTR consisted of 26 persons in 2023, including interns and student helpers.

We have and have had 4 student helpers, as well as 3 student interns.

During 2023, CTR has further focused on profiling CTR on social media:

The number of CTR’s Facebook followers is now over 8,000 and the Instagram account is followed by more than 2,700. The followers are a mix of students from UCPH, scientific researchers, craftspeople etc.

CTR is also profiled internally on Saxo-news, info screens, mailing lists, posters etc.
In the course of 2023 CTR has continued to expand the horizons on the historical, archaeological as well as ethnological and linguistic understandings of textile research and textile heritage. We have continued to expand with even more collaborators, projects and interactions with students of all fields, and by doing that further increasing our role as world renowned research centre on the study of textiles. As years before, our members have participated in numerous conferences, workshops, talks etc. in addition to hosting and organizing all types of events too numerous to be dealt with here. We have also hosted a number of interns and students, ensuring a next generation of textile researchers, and thus continuing our aims towards organising events on all academic levels and making ground-breaking research!

Eva Andersson Strand

Professor and Head of Centre