



Co-funded by the  
European Union



Creative  
Europe  
Culture

**The Fabric of My Life - Newsletter 5**  
**July 2020-January 2020**  
**by ARTEX**

The Fabric of My Life (FABRIC) is a joint project of cultural institutions in DK, GR, and DE with the aim to innovate and test new methods in the cultural sectors concerning migration history, to empower refugee women and to train cultural workers and design students. FABRIC fosters new digital and cultural products co-created with migrants.

*In FABRIC, we see clothing as an individual means of communicating our identity, our history and the future at which we aim.*

Europeans and migrants (furthermost women) are invited to co-create and contribute to exhibitions, digital, pop-up, and conventional shows, and use clothing to narrate their life stories. FABRIC trains cultural workers to widen their scope, reach out to new audiences and speak directly to migrants.

**Monitoring Meetings**

6<sup>th</sup> Monitoring Meeting: 11th September 2020, zoom meeting hosted by the CTR

Participants: Marie-Louise Nosch, Rezvan Farsijani, Solveig Berg Søndergaard, Gülzar Demir, Rabia Kormaz, Stella Spantidaki, Christina Margariti, Kalliopi Sarri, Gitte Engholm, Annette Schieck, Christina Schulte, Else Skjold, Anne Louise Bang, Irene Favero.

7<sup>th</sup> Monitoring Meeting: 4th December 2020, zoom meeting hosted by the CTR

Participants: Marie-Louise Nosch, Rezvan Farsijani, Solveig Berg Søndergaard, Gülzar Demir, Rabia Kormaz, Stella Spantidaki, Christina Margariti, Kalliopi Sarri, Gitte Engholm, Annette Schieck, Christina Schulte, Else Skjold, Anne Louise Bang.

Upcoming Meeting: 12th April 2021 via zoom.

**What's happened at CTR and by the textile artists**

**Podcasting seminars:**

A total of 6 podcast seminars have been hosted by Marie Louise Nosch and Gülzar Demir and 93 participants joined. The resulting podcasts have been published on: [thefabricofmylife.com](http://thefabricofmylife.com)



Co-funded by the  
European Union



Creative  
Europe  
Culture

Activity	trainers	Goal	Date	No of participants	Type of participants
Podcast training workshop at CTR	Gülzar, ML	Learning how to record and edit podcasts	10 August	5	CTR scholars and students
Lecture/presentation at CTR	Gülzar	Presenting FABRIC for international textile scholars	9 Sept	30	international textile scholars
Podcast training workshop in class	Gülzar, ML	Learning how to record and edit podcasts	28 Okt	38	BA students in Ethnology, University Copenhagen
Podcast training workshop in class	Gülzar	Learning how to record and edit podcasts	11 Nov	38	BA students in Ethnology, University Copenhagen
Podcast training workshop online for international scholars	ML	Learning how to record and edit podcasts	10 Nov	5	international scholars
Podcast training workshop online for international scholars	ML Gülzar	Learning how to record and edit podcasts	2 Dec 2020	15	international scholars

## Dissemination knowledge about dress traditions

The theme of the two major papers written this fall was Muslim dress in the 20th and 21st centuries. They were co-written by scholars and students in history, University of Copenhagen.

1. Gülzar Demir, Marie-Louise Nosch and Else Skjold, "How I wear my headscarf. Narratives from young Danish Muslim women in Copenhagen", In *(Re-)Claiming Bodies through Fashion and Style. Gendered Configurations in Muslim Contexts*. Edited by Viola Thimm. Palgrave Macmillan - New Directions in Islam Series (submitted and accepted October 2020).

This paper is based on a survey, field-work and semi-structured interview of young Muslim women in Copenhagen and their taste, choices and feelings about Muslim dress.

2. Gülzar Demir, Rabia Ilhan Korkmaz, Marie Louise Nosch, "Ottoman clothing regulations and the Kemalist clothing legislation in the early 20th century." To be submitted to *Arachne* 2021.

This paper is based on two written exams in the History Master programme, University of Copenhagen. Demir wrote her exam on the fez and male headgear in late 19th and early 20th century Turkey. Ilhan Korkmaz wrote about female dress and headgear in legal regulations and



Co-funded by the  
European Union



Creative  
Europe  
Culture

fashion magazines in the 1920s Turkey. Marie Louise Nosch supervised both exams / assignments. The paper summarises the findings and discusses the gendered aspects of clothing and how modernism, gender and clothing are entangled.

### Other publications appeared in 2020

1. Eva Andersson Strand & Marie-Louise Nosch, "The Wool Zone in Prehistory and Proto-History", in S. Bergerbrandt, S. Sabatini eds. *The Textile Revolution in Bronze Age Europe. Production, Specialisation, Consumption*. Cambridge University Press (2020), 15-38.
2. Marie-Louise Nosch, "How to become a textile worker? Training and apprenticeship of child labourer in the Bronze Age." L. Quillien, K. Sarri (eds.), *Textile Workers. Skills, Labour and Status of Textile Craftspeople Between the Prehistoric Aegean and the Ancient Near East. Proceedings of the Workshop held at 10th ICAANE in Vienna, April 2016*, OREA - Oriental and European Archaeology 13, Austrian Academy of Sciences Press, Vienna (2020), 91-108.
3. Marie-Louise Nosch, Om skønheden ved arkitektur, kort og koder, sprog og skrift. I Forskningens skønhed. Et festskrift til Hendes Majestæt Dronning Margrethe II ved 80-årsfødselsdagen den 16. april 2020. Redigeret af Marita Akhøj Nielsen. Det Kongelige Danske Videnskabernes Selskab (2020), 96-109.
4. Anne-Louise Bang, Jane Malcolm-Davies, Marie-Louise Nosch, Else Skjold, THREADs that Connect. Social Innovation through Textiles (2020). (57 pages).
5. Marie-Louise Nosch, Preface, in Wolfram Schier and Susan Pollock (eds.), *The Competition of Fibers. Early Textile Production in Western Asia, South-east and Central Europe (10000-500 BC)*. International workshop Berlin, March 8-10, 2017. Ancient Textiles Series 36 (2020).
6. Marie Louise Nosch, Agata Ulanowska, Elsa Yvanez, "EuroWeb - a new European network and COST Action 2020-2024" ATR 62 (2020), 24-27.

### Textile artists

#### Rezvan Farsijani, artist - *Promise at Dawn*

"Promise at Dawn" is a house that tells a tale. It is an installation with theatrical decor. The form and structure of it is inspired by refugee children's painting and what the concept of 'home' means not only to them but also to children in different parts of Paris.

The walls are made from transparent fabrics by refugee women from around the globe and it's the result of the chats I had with them. About their love stories, sexual relationships, and their funny tales even in the most dreadful times of their lives. Waiting games at their camps and passing by the oceans.

This artwork highlights the characteristics of these women and their uncertainties based on my observations and conversations with them. With people without a country, but with many dreams. I asked them to embroider their fantasies on these fabrics. The fantasy of their future; theirs and their children. This house with their gentle and beautiful embroideries is a space between reality

and dream; possible and impossible; a space to be heard and to be imagined. Something beyond the cliché definition of immigration, immigrants and their lives. I was trying to showcase their authentic life-stories. Something beyond the image that is sadly in the public mind.

« Promise at Dawn » is a 1960 autobiographical novel by the French writer Romain Gary. Romain Gary tells the story of his childhood and his youth with his mother, a former Russian actress carried by a love and unconditional faith in her son. The story, full of humor and tenderness, tells the story of her tireless fight against adversity, the extravagant energy she deploys so that he knows a great destiny and the efforts of Romain, who is ready to do anything to make his life coincide "with the naive dream of the one he loves".



Rezvan Farsijani, *Promise at Dawn*.

### **Solveig Berg Søndergaard, designer - *Stitching Stories***

Solveig carries out an artistic project called "*Stitching Stories*" conducting ten immigrant and refugee females living in Denmark. Choosing a photo of personal relevance and memory of their former life, the image is enlarged and printed on fabric. The women then start to work over the prints by adding embroidery with yarn and pearls. The project aims at expressing personal emotions related to the image, such as despair, joy, and happiness.



This is an image of a young boy (5 years old) embroidered by his mother. During her escape from Kurdistan, she was forced to leave her son behind and he is currently living with his father and his new wife (now aged 9).

The loss of her son leaves her with great sorrow and pain, which is reflected in her choice of colours (dark and monotone), as well as her choice of stitches (heavy and thick).

### **DTM-Activities from July to December 2020**

In Germany, the 2nd Covid-Lockdown started on November 2nd, 2020, currently appearing to last until January 31st, 2021. Therefore, all activities of the DTM-team were carried out under harsh and tight conditions. Several meetings and activities had to be postponed.

Nevertheless, the museum's staff kept on working hard on preparing the China-exhibition, which was finally opened to the public on November 1st, 2020, but closed again on November 2nd for an indefinite period of time.

In order to address its audience, the museum created its own website, and a film showing the emergence of this exhibition, and a catalogue ([www.deutschestextilmuseum.de](http://www.deutschestextilmuseum.de)).

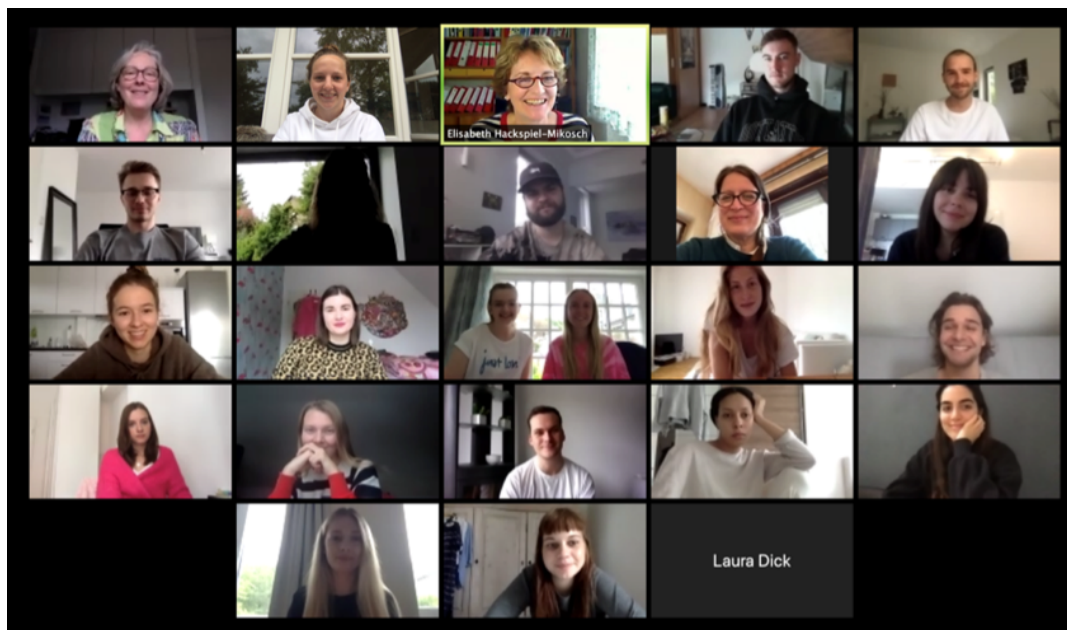
Meanwhile, the FABRIC-team of Christina Schulte and Annette Schieck went on conducting cooperations, interviews, films, collecting products, and initiating various new paths of communication.



### DTM-AMD-Cooperation

This summer term, DTM and AMD conducted three courses at the AMD, dealing with various aspects of the FABRIC-project. The classes were conducted mostly virtually, communication took place via mail and telephone.

1. Prof. Dr. Elisabeth Hackspiel-Mikosch conducted "Fashion in Context", instructing students to research critical topics, and present them to the public. The DTM-team participated in several Zoom-sessions (final presentation on July 8th), and received the written reports on the topics to be employed in the DTM-exhibition.



Zoom-class of "Fashion in context", screenshot by Anna Grote

2. Profs. Claus Bortas, Markus Wirz, and Ines Majowski, taught "Formfinding Dress". Students were introduced into traditional forms of ethnic dress, were inspired by colours, cuts and shapes, and designs, and had to create an outfit. The final presentation took place in physical presence of the students, teachers, and the DTM-team on October 13th, in the AMD Düsseldorf. Students had to give a lecture on their design, present the robe worn by a model, show images of their photo-shootings, and present their sketchbooks. Originally, three ranked prizes were to be handed out by the jury, but the DTM-team decided to hand out five prizes of equal donation, since the results were of unexpected quality and fascination. All of the images and reports will be handed over to the DTM by the end of January. Besides the presentation and interviews with the young designers were filmed by Reimund Meincke, Krefeld. All of these documents will be included into the DTM-exhibition.
3. Prof. Heidi Kincaid conducted a journalism-class, having the students hold telephone-interviews with the FABRIC-group. Heidi Kincaid has collected all of the written reports and



Co-funded by the  
European Union



Creative  
Europe  
Culture

is currently editing the texts. The edited versions will then be handed over to the DTM in order to be integrated into the DTM-exhibition.

### **Interviews on Film - Additions to the DTM-AMD-Photo-Sessions**

Prof. Ralph Lobeck held a class at the AMD on portrait-photography during the winter term 2019/2020. In addition to these images, the DTM-team initiated a series of interviews of the models, being filmed by Reimund Meincke, Krefeld. Interviews with three Turkish ladies, one Palestinian, three Peruvian ladies, an Kosovarian and one British male model, have already been carried out, while those scheduled for November and December 2020, had to be postponed to 2021, due to the Covid-Lockdown.

The material will be included into the DTM-exhibition.

### **DTM-KI-BKVB-Cooperation**

Initiated by the DTM, the vocational school Vera Beckers (BKVB) applied for extra funding at the KI Krefeld (Kommunales Integrationszentrum), in order to conduct a one-week-student-project on decorative techniques. The funding was granted (2.000 €), two teachers of BKVB were involved in the concept and planning, and Jeni Josten, an expert in traditional ethnic embroidery was hired to conduct the work-plan. The schedule foresaw Jeni Josten to start with a theoretical section on ethnic dress and embroidery inspiring the students to sketch and design outfits to be decorated with embroidery. In order to do so, students are to carry out practical exercises with embroidery by hand, but also by computer. Then the students will create parts of the outfit they designed, such as cuffs, neck-openings, button tabs, etc. On the last of five days, a final presentation is scheduled, presenting the results to the public.

The workshop will be accompanied by print and digital media (instagram etc.) and will be filmed. Documentation will be integrated into the DTM-FABRIC-exhibition.

The workshop was scheduled for the beginning of November 2020, but had to be postponed due to the 2nd Covid-Lockdown in Germany. All partners hope to realise it in March 2021.

### **DTM Call for Textile Memories**

In Spring 2020, during the 1st Covid-Lockdown in Germany, the DTM sent out a call for „textile memories“ among the migrant community of Krefeld. On August 26th, Christina and Annette received two women of Turkish background at the museum. One of them presented and explained several textile objects which she had decorated with traditional embroidery, being a vehicle to tell her story: Born in Germany by Turkish parents, she lived a traditional, Turkish inspired life in Germany, but always dreamt of moving to Turkey, her native country. Finally, her family moved to Turkey, where she started to take classes on traditional designs and embroidering-techniques - the objects she showed were the results. Few months after arriving in Turkey, the revolution took place, causing the family to leave the country for Germany again. Therefore, these textiles always remind her of this period of her life.



Co-funded by the  
European Union



Creative  
Europe  
Culture



Traditional decorative techniques, photos by Christina Schulte

## Perspectives

### Extra-Funding

To the DTM another generous extra-funding is prospected by the KI, to be spent in the name of the FABRIC-project. The DTM-team hopes to start a programme in physical presence in Spring and Summer 2021, addressing migrant women of the city and region of Krefeld. The DTM-team is currently working on this programme.

### Another DTM-AMD-Cooperation in summer-term 2021

Prof. Ralph Lobeck will hold a class in spring, teaching corporate design. The class will create several designs on the virtual exhibition, to be chosen from by the DTM-team when starting its realisation.

## Interviews

Few interviews of the portrait-photo-models still have to be carried out and filmed. Films need to be cut and finalised in order to be included into the virtual DTM-exhibition.

## DTM-Exhibition

Since the exhibition was postponed several times, and since the whole exhibition-schedule of the DTM tumbled all over, the DTM-team has decided to transfer the FABRIC-exhibition into virtual media and present it online. The decision was made in October 2020. Since then, Andrea Sturm, secretary of the museum with homepage-abilities, was involved in the project, and several meetings took place in order to create such a virtual exhibition. The virtual exhibition is scheduled to be published by summer 2021.

All FABRIC-partners are kindly asked to contribute to this exhibition. Please send us

- Portrait-photography of yourself,
- Links to the podcasts, and other projects already visible in the internet,
- Images and reports on your activities,

by the end of January 2021.

Thank you!





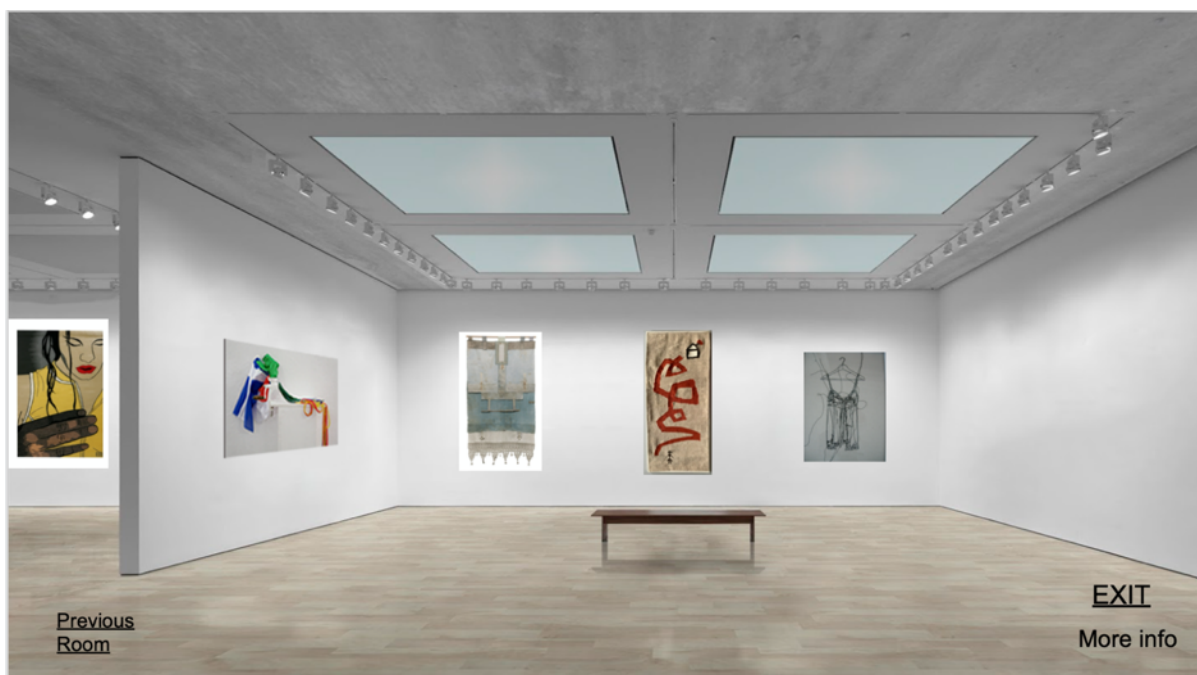
Co-funded by the  
European Union



Creative  
Europe  
Culture

### What happened at ARTEX during this time

In Greece, like in the rest of the FABRIC countries, Covid-19 has put a stop to all face to face activities of the project, such as textile workshops and most importantly the organisation of the art exhibition we were planning for this year. During the summer, we decided to opt for a virtual exhibition instead of a live one and this fall we focused on its organisation. The exhibition, entitled "Textile Memories" will host artwork of c. 25 modern artists (textile art, paintings, installations, 3D etc.) who work on textiles, refugees and emotions. The curator will be the art historian Louisa Karapidaki. At the moment, the team is uploading the artwork on the virtual exhibition platform and organising the interactive visitor's path and the exhibition is planned to be published online in February 2021.



Current view of the exhibition platform (under construction).

### Virtual Talk about *The Fabric of My Life*, 20<sup>th</sup> November 2020

In November 2020, the Hellenic Costume Society ([www.costume.gr](http://www.costume.gr)), in the context of the action "In Conversation: Encounters with Curators, Researchers and Artists on Dress as an Object of Study and Display", invited Stella Spantidaki to give a virtual talk on zoom about the FABRIC project, entitled "FABRIC research in the times of Corona: challenges and ideas". The event was moderated by Elia Petridou, member of the Hellenic Costume Society and collaborator of the project. The event had c. 25 participants.

### In Conversation 1



Friday, 20<sup>th</sup> November 18:00

#### ***Fabric research in the time of Corona: challenges and ideas***

with **Dr. Stella Spantidaki**, Archaeologist – Specialist in ancient textiles,  
Director of ARTEX, Athens  
Moderated by Elia Petridou

*Photo from a weaving workshop, 2019*

The [\*Fabric of My Life\*](#) is a collaborative artistic and social project between cultural institutions in Denmark, Greece and Germany, funded by Creative Europe 2019-2022, with the aim to innovate and test new methods in the cultural sectors concerning migration history, to train cultural workers and design students and to empower refugee women and bring them closer to western societies. In this project, using the fabric as a carrier of identity, emotion and memory, we aim to record and save textile memories of women refugees both of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, as well as recent ones. Refugees are invited to participate in interactive weaving workshops and co-create textile products intended to be exhibited in digital and conventional shows. The project also trains cultural workers to widen their scope, reach out to new audiences and speak directly to refugee/immigrant populations.

**Appendix: Chronicle-article in: Die Heimat 91, 2020, pp. 6-8.**