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The Fabric of My Life – Newsletter 8

January 2022 – July 2022

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.

What's happened at DSKD?

10th Monitoring meeting

Hosts: Kolding Designskole, Denmark, 11th March 2022, 13:00-14:00

Participants:

CTR: Marie-Louise Nosch, Rezvan Farsijani, Solvejg Berg Søndergård, Anine Aakjær Jensen (online)

National Museum of Denmark: Gitte Engholm

ARTEX: Stella Spantidaki (online)

Deutsches Textilmuseum: Annette Schick, Andrea Sturm.

DSDK: Thomas Binder, Alexandra Lindek

Apologies: Christina Margariti, Kalliopi Sarri

Agenda:

1. Approval of minutes from 9th Monitoring meeting, September 2021
2. Approval of agenda
3. Newsletter July-December 2021 edited by DKDS. Approval. (Alexandra)
4. Final Newsletter, January-June 2022 (Anine)
5. Presentations by partners: progress on projects and needs for budgetary changes.
6. Continuous reporting, presented by Anine
7. Next meeting: date to be decide
8. Other

Minutes:

1. Minutes from 9th Monitoring meeting, September 2021 were approved
2. Approval of agenda
3. Newsletter July-December 2021 edited by DKDS. No major comments had been given. However, Anine pointed out that new EU regulations require us to deliver much more extensive caption texts (so-called ALT text) describing what goes on in the photos. These texts are required for all documents on the Copenhagen University website. See appendix with explanation.
4. Final Newsletter, January-June 2022. It will be edited by CTR and Pernille/Anine. Please send your reports and images and ALT texts to Anine by 14th July 2022)
5. Presentations by partners:

Deutsches Textilmuseum made a presentation of the development of portraits, interviews and online exhibition (see appendix). They plan a closing event in Krefeld where they will include all the people who have contributed to the projects.

ARTEX in Greece is editing the chapters and we will receive the layouted papers soon.

CTR has worked on the continuous reporting and a few podcasts. The podcast platform is active for two more years.

National Museum of Denmark has hosted a workshop on embroidery and is planning one more on costumes from Iraq and embroidery.

DSDK's main activity is the hosting of the 10th monitoring meeting and the exhibition of textile art.

6. Continuous reporting presented by Anine. Attached is a template with the categories of activities. Please report what you have done in the project on the lines.
7. Next meeting: 1 June (outlook invitation with zoom link)
8. Other: Marie Louise says that new Creative Calls are out, deadline extended to May, please see: <https://creative-europe-desk.de/>

There are 3 kinds of cooperation projects:

- 3 Partners
- 5 partners
- 10 partners.

<https://kultur.creative-europe-desk.de/foerderung/foerderbereiche/kooperationsprojekte.html>

Activities and workplan for the weekend of the opening of the FABRIC exhibition at Design School Kolding..

9th – 12th of March 2022



Figure 1: Invitation to the opening of the reception for the Fabric of My Life Exhibition.

See the rest of the exhibition material in the appendix.

9 March:

Arrival in Kolding. Check-in at Hotel Kolding (Rezvan and assistant)

Rezvan FARSIJANI and Alexandre Thomas PINEDA arrives at 09.05 in Copenhagen with Airfrance (AF1750)

Exhibition meeting during lunch break. Setting up exhibition at Design School Kolding, afternoon (Anna Kersig, Allan Schmidt, Alexandra and student helper: Silja Sophie Rosendal).

Evening free



Figure 2: The exhibition space at DSKD.

10 March:

8.30 – 17.15: Setting up exhibition at Design School Kolding (Anna Kersig, Allan Schmidt, Rezvan, Alexandre and Alexandra).

During the day arrivals: (Else Skjold, Anne Louise Bang, Anna Kersig,

18.30 – 22.00: Welcome Dinner at Madkælderen, Koldinghus (Else Skjold, Anne Louise Bang, Rezvan Farsijani, Alexandre Thomas Pineda, Annette Schieck, Andrea Sturm, Rachele Pierini, Anna Kersig and Alexandra Lindek).

21.00: late arrival (Marie-Louise Nosch)

11 March:

08.00 Bus departure from Tingbjerg Kulturhus (CTR)

08.00: last preparations for opening of exhibition in the afternoon at Design School Kolding.

08.30 Bus departure from CTR by metrostation Islands brygge. Coffee and tea and breakfast in the bus (CTR)

10.40 Taxa/own car from Design School Kolding to Trapholt Museum, Æblehaven 23, 6000 Kolding: (Marie-Louise Nosch, Else Skjold, Anne Louise Bang, Rezvan Farsijani, Alexandre Thomas Pineda, Annette Schieck, Andrea Sturm, Rachele Pierini and Alexandra Lindek).

11.00 Other partners arrive at Trapholt Museum (Gitte Engholm, Susanne Lervad, Jette Olsen, Karen Nybroe Mogensen)

11.30: Arrival of bus from Tingbjerg (Henriette Rolf Larsen and 43 women), CTR (Magali An Berthon) and CBS (Silviya Svejenova Velikova and Anna)

11.30: Exhibiton at Trapholt: Verner Panton – Farver en ny verden (and others).



Figure 3: Photos from the Verner Panton Exhibition at Trapholt Museum.

12.15 transport to DSKD, Ågade 10 taxi, (Annette Schieck, Andrea Sturm, Gitte Engholm, Marie-Louise Nosch and Alexandra Lindek)

12.30: Lunch at Trapholt for guest (excl. Participants in the 10th Monitoring Meeting)

12.30 – 14.00: 10th Monitoring Meeting at Design School Kolding incl. Lunch (Marie-Louise Nosch, Annette Schieck, Andrea Sturm, Gitte Engholm, Thomas Binder and Alexandra Lindek)

14.30: Opening of Exhibition by Lene Tanggaard (Rezvan Farsijani and Solveig Søndergaard), DSKD, ground floor. Followed by reception and exhibition. (Official part of programme)

16.00 Guided tour at Design School Kolding.



Figure 4: Left: Beautiful Textile flowers were handmade at the Tingbjerg pop-up shop during the opening reception. Centre: Picture from workshop. Right: Photo from weaving workshop.

16.30 Bus departure from Kolding to CTR/TingBjerg/CBS, CPH. Sandwiches/beverages in the bus.

18.00 – 22.00: For those who stay in Kolding: dinner in town (Else Skjold, Rezvan Farsijani, Alexandre Thomas Pineda, Annette Schieck, Andrea Sturm, Solveig Søndergaard, Thomas Binder, Gitte Engholm, Rachele Pierini and Alexandra Lindek).

19.30 Arrival CTR.

12 March:

Visit to museums and networking.

10.00 – 12.00, Koldinghus: Exhibition ' Mary og prinsesserne ' about Crown princesses in history. Opening hours. <https://www.kongernessamling.dk/koldinghus/mary-kronprinsesserne/>

(Extract from Lene Tanggaards speech)



Figure 5: Lene Tanggaards giving her opening speech at the Exhibition in Kolding.

'Today we celebrate culture, creativity, craft, and clothing. And we celebrate the works of two wonderfully talented textile artists, Rezvan Farsijani and Solveig Søndergaard.

We also celebrate perseverance. The perseverance of refugees everywhere to overcome loss and displacement. And the perseverance of identity, memories, and stories.

We're all deeply saddened and troubled by the war in Europe. By the fact that, once again, women and children are forced to flee and leave behind their loved ones, their homes, and their careers. Many of them carrying with them, literally, only the clothes on their backs.

Their immediate safety is a priority, of course. But as human beings we need more than food, shelter, and clothes to feel whole. We need art, creativity, history. Even when we are at our most vulnerable, we need to be able to express ourselves and have a space where we can share our stories, activate our inner resources, and unfold our creativity.

Recognizing clothing as a tactile, tangible, and visual means of communication, Rezvan, Solveig and The Fabric of My Life project have made this space available to refugee women by inviting them to co-create and use textiles to narrate their life stories. The outcomes visualise the bonds between women, migration and textile cultural heritage and are strong means of dialogue and reflection. In their new form, the clothes become "tokens of memory", as Project Manager Marie-Louise Nosch has so beautifully put it.

At its core, design is really the basic human capability of shaping reality. Of interacting, innovating, improving, inventing. By allowing refugee women to explore the designer within, Rezvan and Solveig purposefully help them to articulate and visualize their history and thus reshape their reality – through embroidery, of course, and through experiments, empathy, and creativity.'



Figure 6: Three photos from the exhibition

What's happened at the National Museum?

Designfestival in Tingbjerg

Thursday the 16th of June 2022



Thursday the 16th June 2022 a festival on Ukrainian handicraft took place in the community center in the suburban area Thingbjerg. Activities focused on giving the Danish residents in Thingbjerg an impression of the handicraft skills that the new Ukrainian refugees brought with them and to start a dialogue and exchange of knowledge.

In one of the workshop participants could make their own flower crown from paper, Figure 7, and have a photo taken at stand in cardboard cutouts, that showed a typical national male and female costume (a *Vyshyvanka*, casual name for the embroidered shirt in Ukrainian and Belarusian, but also found in other Slavic and Eastern European countries. Ukrainian *vyshyvanka* is distinguished by local embroidery features specific to Ukrainian embroidery. The Ukrainian flower crown is known as “vinok” and it has long been a part of traditional folk dress.



Figure 7: Left: Photo from the workshop on flower crowns. Right: Cardboard cut-out, Thingbjerg. Photo: Henriette Rolf Larsen.

Today refugees demonstrating against the ongoing war in Ukraine after the attack by Russia, often wear the flower crown as symbol of their strong national feelings Figure 8.

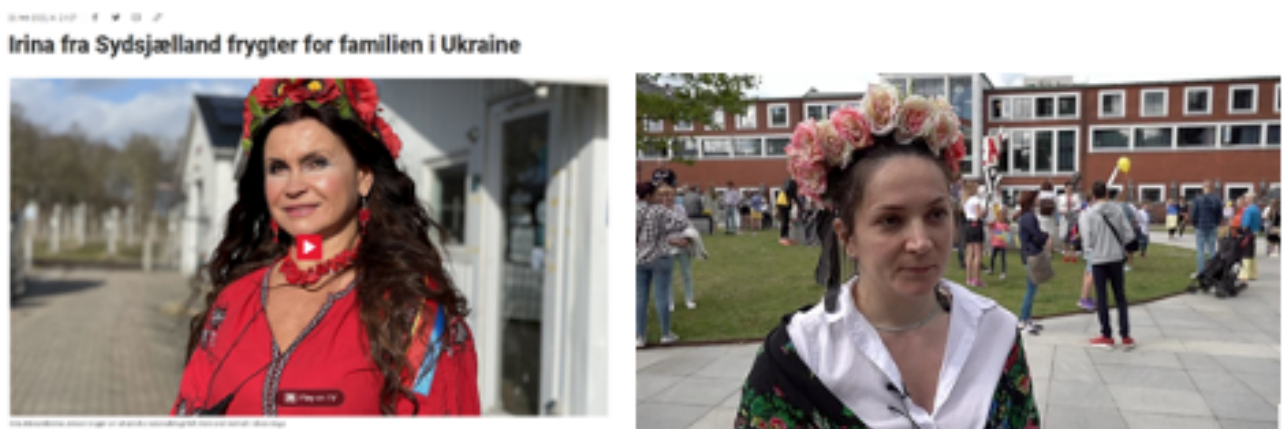


Figure 8: Left: screenshot from interview from TV2 Østjylland, 23rd of February 2022. Right: Screenshot from interview from TV2 Østjylland, Aarhus, 22nd of June

Visit to the Open-Air Museum

We invited a large group of immigrant women from the suburban area Tingbjerg to visit the Open-Air Museum Frilandsmuseet to introduce the women to the museum, that exhibit the countryside of historic Denmark. The museum market itself as a place where you can easily imagine yourselves transported centuries back in time, strolling along the gravel roads and visiting the fully-furnished homes of the people of the past. The museum puts on many different workshops such as butter grinding, weaving, spinning and carding of wool.



Figure 9: Photo of museum staff and educators dressed as peasant wives from the country.

On the way to the workshop area the group passed a well and as everyone had the chance to try to draw water from the well. Some were familiar with the well from their home country, while others were born in Denmark and had only heard their grandmothers speak about the wells. **Error! Reference source not found..**

In the workshop the group were given a lecture on wool, carded and spun and were even allowed to try it. And the conversation turned to whether one's grandmother made it in the home country and in what way. Figure 11.

We imagined that it would be instructive for the women to see the similarities between textile production in Denmark and their home countries. And it did indeed activate a lot of memories and started discussions on the similarities between the Danish textiles production and tradition in the past countryside life and their home countries.

At the museum the group were greeted by the museum staff and educators dressed as peasant wives from the country in the old days. Figure 9.



Figure 10: The women visiting the museum are having a go at drawing water from a well.



Figure 11: Left: Person carding wool. Centre: Person spinning wool. Right: close up of hand with spindle for spinning wool.

The second workshop was on weaving and took place in one of the old farms. Here the educators demonstrated weaving techniques with a loom and had a number of woven textiles to be touched. Figure 12.



Figure 12: A ring of plant dyed yarn.

Finally, the group were introduced to the very delicate knits, laces and skirts. And a very lively discussion and trying on started. Figure 13.



Figure 13: Left: Person holding a delicate lace. Right: Same person now wearing the lace.





EXHIBITION 11.03.-30.03.2022 DESIGN SCHOOL KOLDING

THE FABRIC OF MY LIFE

DK:  

THE FABRIC OF MY LIFE (FABRIC) IS A COLLABORATIVE PROJECT BETWEEN CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS IN DENMARK, GREECE, AND GERMANY 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.

HOW IS MEMORY AND FAMILY HISTORY REFLECTED IN TEXTILES AND CLOTHING? IN THE FABRIC OF MY LIFE PROJECT, WE EXPLORED THIS THEME THROUGH ORAL NARRATIVES, PODCASTS, INTERVIEWS, EDUCATION, AND RESEARCH, AND ALSO VIA EXPERIMENTAL AND ARTISTIC ACTIVITIES DIRECTED BY THE TWO TEXTILE ARTISTS SOLVEIG SØNDERGAARD AND REZVAN FARSIJANI, WHO JOINED THE FABRIC OF MY LIFE IN 2019.

MARIE-LOUISE NERICH, CENTRE FOR TEXTILE RESEARCH, UNIVERSITY OF COPENHAGEN
& JESSE BRAGOU, INSTITUTE FOR ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN, THE ROYAL DANISH ACADEMY



SOLVEIG SØNDERGAARD

IN SOLVEIG SØNDERGAARD'S ARTISTIC WORK 'STITCHING STORIES', SOLVEIG AND REFUGEE AND MIGRANT WOMEN IN KOLDING, DENMARK, MADE USE OF THEIR OWN CHILDHOOD MEMORIES AND HANDED-DOWN TEXTILE SKILLS AS AN ARTISTIC TRIGGER.

QUITE LITERALLY, THE WOMEN WERE INVITED TO DO EMBROIDERY ON FAMILY PHOTOS THAT WERE PRINTED ON TRANSPARENT FABRIC, AS A WAY OF REMEMBERING, HONOURING, OR GIVING NEW LIFE TO A LOST HISTORY.

THE PRINTED AND EMBROIDERED PHOTOS DISPLAY BOTH THE FRONT SIDES OF THE EMBROIDERY AS WELL AS THE BACK SIDES WITH KNOTS, COARSE STITCHES, AND LOOSE THREADS.

THE EMBROIDERIES INVITE US TO REFLECT UPON BOTH SIDES OF OUR LIVES AND MEMORIES OF BOTH HAPPY DAYS AND DIFFICULTIES.

CO-ARTISTS

AZRA BASHIA
REBIRRA S.
NAGREA
SHEMAH
ASRA
FAIMA
NEHLA

Poster about the artist Solveig Søndergaard, her co-artists and the art pieces for the exhibition. The poster background is light grey. In the top right corner, you see a floating piece of embroidered textile and in the left bottom corner there is a black and white photo of Solveig. In the bottom centre there are some small text sections.



Poster about the artist Rezvan Farsijani, her co-artists and the collaborative art piece for the exhibition. The poster background is white. From the top right corner to the left bottom corner there is an L-shaped close-up photo of red fabric with colourful embroidery. In the middle to the left there is a black and white picture of Rezvan and in the top centre there are some small text sections.

Appendix



Exhibition catalogue.



Inside of Exhibition catalogue.

Appendix



SoMe: Instagram post in relation to Exhibition at Design School Kolding

