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An embroidered indulgence

by MERCEDES LÓPEZ GARCÍA, historian and documentalist,
specialising in textiles and clothing.
Photographs: HÉCTOR CASTRO MARTORELL

¹ For more information
consult the Deu Museum
website: www.museudeu.com.

The Deu Museum is a public institution in El Vendrell (Tarragona), founded with a donation made by the notary Antoni Deu Font to the city. Deu was a collector who followed his own highly personal standards to amass a great many works of art throughout his lifetime. Chronologically, the objects range from the twelfth to the late twentieth century. While they have no thematic unity, several fairly well-defined groups can be established: religious carvings, silver and gold liturgical objects, sculpture, contemporary paintings and ceramics, drawings and watercolours, furniture, “Modernista” glass, ivories, reliquaries, pharmacy mortars and oriental rugs¹.

An exceptional object

The object in question belongs to the Deu Museum and can be placed in the group of liturgical objects because it is an indulgence. Unusually, however, the original print has been decorated with hand embroidery and silk and metal appliqué. The basic information for the object is set out below:

Name: indulgence

Location: Deu Museum, rec. no. 2842

Dimensions: 28.5 x 22 cm

Origin: unknown, possibly Spain

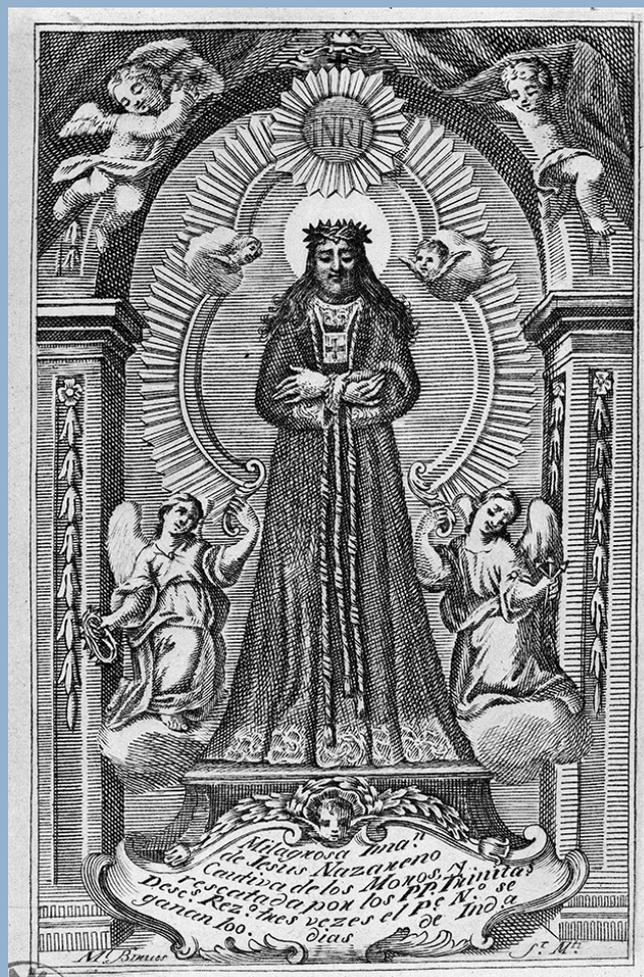
Date: second half 18th century – first half 19th century

Materials: paper, linen or hemp, silk, metal (possibly silver and other unconfirmed metals), wax, pâte de verre

Techniques: engraving, taffeta, hand embroidery, appliqué



Image of the indulgence, framed by embroidered decoration with floral motifs.



Iconographic description

2 INRI is the initialism representing the Latin inscription “Jesus the Nazarene, King of the Jews”.

3 According to the Code of Canon Law, “An indulgence is the remission before God of temporal punishment for sins whose guilt is already forgiven, which a properly disposed member of the Christian faithful gains under certain and defined conditions by the assistance of the Church which as minister of redemption dispenses and applies authoritatively the treasury of the satisfactions of Christ and the saints”, Chapter IV, Indulgences, (Cann. 992-997), in *Code of Canon Law*, available at: <http://goo.gl/0p5p5S>.

The piece is divided into two areas: the central part, which contains the indulgence, and the part that frames it. The central figure is of Christ standing, with long hair, a beard and robe. He wears the crown of thorns on his head and his hands are tied at waist level with a rope that descends from his neck and hangs in front of his feet. On his chest, he wears a scapular with the cross of the Trinitarian Order and above his head is the inscription INRI².

Christ is accompanied by six angels, three on each side. The angels in the lower part wear a crown of thorns and have three nails. All of the elements are linked to the Passion of Christ, with the representation following the iconography of the figure known as the Jesus of Medinaceli, a life-size statue venerated in the Madrid basilica that bears its name. The National Library of Spain, in Madrid, houses an engraving that is very similar, including even the inscription at the bottom: “*Milagrosa Imagen de / Iesus Nazareno cautiva de los Moros / y rescatada p. los PP Trinitarios Desc. Rezando tres / vezes el Pater Noster se ganan 100 días de Ind.*” (In English: “Miraculous Image of / Jesus the Nazarene captive of the Moors / and rescued by the Barefoot Trinitarians. Reciting three / times The Lord’s Prayer can earn one 100 days of Ind.”) The last word is the abbreviation for indulgence and defines the object’s function³. The Church generally issued indulgences in the form of prints, with a religious image accompanied by an inscription.

Detail of the monstrance with central piece imitating the host and engraved with a cross, the initials IHS (monogram of the name of Jesus Christ) and three nails.



Monogram of Ave Maria, with the embroidered letters A and M superimposed.



Two more symbols can be found in the embroidered frame that surrounds the central scene: the upper part has a monstrance that surrounds a circular piece, possibly of wax, engraved with the initials IHS, while the lower part has the monogram of Ave Maria. The rest of the frame is decorated with floral motifs of varying sizes.



Inscription beneath the image, showing the arrangement of silk threads around it, with gold leaf adorning the hem of Jesus' robe above.

4 The braided thread has a central thread of silk around which a very fine sheet of metal is wrapped, nearly covering the silk completely.

Technical description

In the indulgence in the Deu Museum, the engraving is only visible in the inscriptions and the flesh of the figures, while double-stranded silk thread, braided metallic thread⁴ and metallic leaf cover the rest of it. This must not be mistaken for embroidery, however, because all of the threads have been fixed with some sort of adhesive and arranged in parallel or zigzag lines, filling the surface of the paper.

This part is affixed to a piece of card that is, in turn, affixed to a larger piece of taffeta made out of linen or hemp. The textile serves as a support for the central image and for the embroidery of the frame. A look at the reverse shows the textile being reinforced with paper.

The decoration of the frame itself can rightly be described as embroidery. The materials are silk thread and, to a greater extent, metallic thread. The silk threads have little twist, while there are up to twelve different types of metallic thread. In general, the metallic threads most commonly used to weave or embroider come typically in the form of thin sheets or braided threads. This piece, however, has another type. It has thick threads that combine different metallic strands to form bouclés, coiled threads in which some coils have a circular cross-section and some a quadrangular cross-section, or to form braided threads, some combining different metals. In the embroidery of the period, silvery metals generally correspond to silver, but pure gold was never



Reverse of the object showing the paper that reinforces the textile and the stitch work.

Different threads used in the embroidery: silk thread and a variety of metallic threads. [See structural detail of the floral embroidery.](#)



5 FERNÁNDEZ, E. *Los talleres de bordado de las cofradías*, Editora Nacional, Madrid, 1982, pp. 71-81.

6 GONZÁLEZ, M.A. *Catálogo de bordados*, Instituto Valencia de Don Juan, Madrid, 1974, p. 54.

used in gilding. Instead, they used silver coated in gold powder, also known as gilt silver, and in some cases the silver was replaced with copper, resulting in gilt metal or imitation gold⁵.

Turning to the technique, the silk thread has been used to embroider the central part of the largest flowers using a knotted stitch, while some of the petals have been done with long basting stitches, which could be identified as flat stitches. The metallic threads follow the embroidery technique known as gold appliqué⁶, which involves applying the thread or strand without piercing the fabric, affixing it to the textile with small, very discreet stitches until achieving the shape required by the design.

A look at the reverse of the piece shows the original colour of the silk threads, which is lost on the finished side. The remainder of the stitches are done with linen or hemp thread that is the same colour as the background textile. This thread is of two thicknesses: a thicker thread in the centre of some coils and a finer thread to hold the thicker strands.

In addition to the embroidery, the piece has appliqués of silver sequins at the centre of the medium-sized flowers and pâte de verre beads at the centre of the smaller flowers. These elements, together with all the threads mentioned earlier, create a stylistically rich and dynamic design.

Function of the indulgence

In addition to the function described above, the first word of the inscription, “Milagrosa” (or “Miraculous” in English), indicates that this indulgence could also be seen as a talisman to protect against misfortune. Religious prints were the most widespread prints of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In fact, they were the leading business of engravers, whose most important customers

7 CARRETE, J., CHECA, F. & BOZAL, V. “El grabado en España (siglos xv-xviii)”, in *Summa Artis*, vol. XXXI, Espasa-Calpe, Madrid, 1987, p. 412.

8 ALARCÓN, C. “La iconografía religiosa en el siglo xviii”, in *Revista de Dialectología y Tradiciones Populares*, no. 45, Madrid, 1990, p. 269.

9 FERNÁNDEZ, D. “Historia de la imagen de Jesús Nazareno de Medinaceli de Madrid”, in *Actas del VII Congreso y Encuentro Nacional de Cofradías y Hermandades dedicadas a las Advocaciones de Jesús Nazareno Cautivo, Rescatado, de Medinaceli*, Cofradía del Santísimo Cristo de la Expiación y del Silencio, León, 2011, pp. 213-221.

10 PORRES, Bonifacio, *Libertad a los cautivos*, Secretariado Trinitario, Córdoba-Salamanca, 1997, p. 509.

11 The Order of the Most Holy Trinity and of the Captives was founded by the Frenchman Saint John of Matha (1160-1213) and it was dedicated to the peaceful redemption of captives through mercy. The sixth work of mercy is to free captives and act as mediators through the exchange or request of charity to pay ransoms. For additional information on this religious order, see PORRES, Bonifacio, *Op. cit.*

12 The protection of the Medinaceli home continued even during

were parishes, convents and religious orders, which would order enormous print runs of the images they venerated⁷. In the case of the Jesus of Medinaceli, the brotherhood in Madrid owned the engraving and one of its inventories even indicates that it had possession of the copper plate⁸.

The figure of Jesus of Medinaceli enjoyed a boom from the year 1682 because of its rescue by the Trinitarian Order. While the identity of the sculptor is not known, the piece is believed to have been produced in Seville in the first half of the seventeenth century⁹. In the mid-seventeenth century, it was taken to La Mámora (present-day Mehdiya in Morocco). But in 1681, the Sultan Moulay Ismail conquered the city, took soldiers and images captive and removed them to the city of Meknes¹⁰. There, Father Fray Pedro de los Ángeles, a Barefoot Trinitarian, witnessed the outrages to which the image was subjected and put in motion the steps necessary to rescue the captives and the figure of Jesus¹¹.

Upon being rescued, the image began wearing a scapular with the Trinitarian cross on its chest and it went on a journey from city to city. When it reached Madrid in 1682, its fame as the “Rescued Jesus” and a miraculous figure preceded it. So much so that the authorities and many faithful wishing to venerate the image gathered for its reception. It was put in the convent of the Barefoot Trinitarian Fathers in the city, next to which a chapel was built between 1686 and 1689 through the patronage of the Duke of Medinaceli¹². In the early eighteenth century, its worship spread to all the dominions of Spain, Germany, Italy, Hungary, and Poland and even to the West Indies by means of reproductions in sculpture, painting, prints and medals and through the creation of brotherhoods.

Conclusions

Although there are parallels with the print in the National Library of Spain, no embroidered indulgence has yet been found in any online databases that bring together the collections of different museums at a regional or national level. While representations of religious images that combine paper for the flesh and

the disentailments of Mendizábal, after which the church was built on its current site. This is why the image is known by that name and not by “Jesús Rescatado”, which was its original name. LARIOS, J.J.

“El comienzo de una relación secular: nuestro Padre Jesús y el Duque de Medinaceli”, in *Actas del VII Congreso y Encuentro Nacional... Op. cit.*, pp. 207-212.

13 Examples include Our Lady of Guadalupe (Reg. no. 1987/01/01) and Saint Ignatius of Loyola (Reg. no. 2014/02/01), both from the Museo de América, whose records can be consulted on line in the Red Digital de Colecciones de Museos de España (<http://ceres.mcu.es/pages/>), and the image of Saint Bibiana (Reg. no. 2278) in the Museu Arxiu Tomàs Balvey, whose record can be found in the Museu en Línia database (<http://goo.gl/5VOnZu>).

14 The records for these pieces can be found at:

<http://goo.gl/vDM1J1>

(completing the “REGISTER NUMBER” field with 2943 for the cape and 11322 for the purse).

15 FLORIANO, A., *El bordado*, Alberto Martín, Barcelona, 1942, pp. 18-23 and GONZÁLEZ, M.A., 1974, *Op. cit.*, p. 44.

embroidery over the remainder of the image have been found¹³, they all date from the eighteenth century.

On the other hand, there are parallels with the embroidery of two objects housed in the Documentation Centre and Textile Museum of Terrassa, particularly a purse dated from the eighteenth century, which has metallic threads of the same type and uses the same technique to decorate the indulgence¹⁴. Based on the quality of the materials used, the technique and the function of the object, it may perhaps belong to the category of scholarly embroidery, according to the classification established by experts in the field¹⁵. It is not known whether the indulgence was issued with embroidery or whether the decoration was added later. From the identified similarities, however, the print and the type of embroidery appear to be contemporary, possibly from the latter half of the eighteenth century or the first half of the nineteenth century. As for who did the embroidery, the fact that the object is an indulgence and tight control was exercised over indulgences, our hypothesis is that it was probably done in the workshops of a brotherhood or convent.

The reverse of the object poses another mystery. No remains of a backing have been found, so we do not know whether it had one or what it might have been made of. The object was found in a frame of much later date. The deterioration of the wood and glass made it necessary to remove the indulgence. From the silver filigree that decorates the perimeter of the front, the object appears to maintain its original margins, but it must certainly have had a backing or been affixed to a larger piece, because the reverse could not have been visible. Nor have any nail marks been found in the margins or any adhesive marks on the paper, though there are small holes made by a needle. This suggests that the object might have been hand-stitched to another piece of textile.

With the publication of this brief description of such a singular and extraordinary indulgence, perhaps these gaps in our knowledge can soon be filled in. ●

Unravelling the thread: checking the attribution of a velvet train to Charles Frederick Worth

by MARC PLATA PUIG,
Textil Museum and Documentation Centre (CDMT)

The collections of the Terrassa Textile Museum and Documentation Centre comprise a great variety of pieces from all over the world, from all strata of society, and from cultures dating back to the first century CE. Among this diversity, one feature common to most of the pieces is that they are anonymous; we have no means of knowing who made them. In the case of dress and costume we tend to have more information about their creators, as most of them date from the 1880s onwards. One example is the piece that I made the subject of my final degree project: a splendid burgundy-coloured velvet train attributed to Charles Frederick Worth (rec. no. 15396). In my project, I tried to justify this attribution on the basis of evidence from two different sources: the fabrics used to make the piece, and the historical documentation consulted.

I first came into contact with this velvet train during the time I spent with the Museum's restoration service, as part of my degree course. In July 2015 the train was taken out of storage and was sent directly to the restoration workshops to be prepared for display at the exhibition entitled *Xavier Gosé (1876-1915)* held at the National Art Museum of Catalonia. I was immediately struck by this piece, not just because of its majestic beauty but because of its attribution to Charles Frederick Worth, the first great exponent of *haute couture*. I would find out later that this attribution was made by the train's previous owner, the French collector Dominique Miraille, the proprietor of the Musée de la Mode in Albi, France. Miraille also claimed that the train had belonged to Hélène Koechlin, who had acquired it in 1882. Nonetheless, I realised almost immediately that there was no evidence to back up the attribution; the piece lacked the label of the House of Worth and there was no record of any earlier work to demonstrate its provenance.

Intrigued by this situation, I decided to carry out an exhaustive study of the piece in search of proof that would confirm or disprove the attribution. My research was divided into two clear areas. The first focused on the intrinsic elements of the piece that could provide information: I would examine the fabrics, the decorations (embroidery and passementerie), the technique used and the design, as well as its state of preservation and the effects of the passing

The train after treatment.
©Marc Plata



Front view of the train
on display at the exhibition.
©Marc Plata



General view of the magnificent embroidered lilacs (*Syringa vulgaris*). ©Quico Ortega/CDMT

of time. The second part of the study would be a thorough historical analysis, trying to organise the scarce information available and seeking out new sources.

You may be wondering why it is so important to establish whether or not the piece was by Worth. The answer is that Worth, in addition to his huge contribution to fashion, was the first designer to see his creations as unique works of art that should be signed. Therefore, the obvious response is “If he signed all his pieces, what happened to this one?” For the moment, please be patient: all will be revealed at the end of the article.

Before preventing the evidence, it’s important to be aware of the importance of signing works of art. If we go back to the Renaissance, when the human condition became the focus of artistic creation, a distinction began to be made between the artist and the craftsman. This is when painters began to sign their works, to underline that these were intellectual creations.

Clothes, in contrast, continued to be considered as objects of use and their aesthetic or material value was ignored; it was frescoes and altarpieces that received the attention. The poor wove and sewed their own clothes, and the rich had theirs made for them; but neither the poor nor the rich had seen their clothes as something worthy of being admired or put on display – far less something that deserved to be signed. For centuries, tailors and dressmakers belonged to the artisan class. Rose Bertin, dressmaker to Marie Antoinette, was the first to add her signature, but it was not until the second half of the nineteenth century when Charles Frederick Worth, famous as the couturier of the Empress Eugénie of France, consolidated the idea of using a label. Nevertheless, Worth conceived his creations or *toilettes* as a *toute ensemble* – a fact that, as we shall see, may have an important bearing on our study. The French historian Hippolyte Taine gives us an idea of the personality of Worth, and of how he conceived his art:

1 [P. 187] LAVER, James (1990) *Costume and Fashion: A Concise History*. Ediciones Cátedra. Madrid.

“This arid, nervous, dwarfish creature [Worth] receives them nonchalantly, stretched out on a couch, a cigar between his lips. He growls “Walk! Turn! Good! Come back in a week and I will have an appropriate *toilette* for you”. It is he, not they, who chooses”¹

The imprint of the House of Worth: what do the fabrics tell us?

In this section I present the evidence I obtained during my study of the fabrics which sheds light on the authorship of the piece. I will also describe some of its most interesting features.

The piece has three main parts; the train, the band stretching up from the waist to the shoulder and bust, and the belt. The outer fabric is a soft Burgundy-coloured short pile silk. The lining comprises several satin pieces in pale pink. All the stitching is done by hand, mainly with silk thread. The piece is attached to the bodice with a grosgrain ribbon and a clasp, which was probably concealed by the bodice of the original dress.

On the right, descending from the belt, is some magnificent embroidery with floral motifs, made from a variety of threads, some of them metal. The flowers bear a strong resemblance to lilac (*Syringa vulgaris*) and are arranged in a bouquet with many small leaves. The whole of the edge of the train bears a fringe of brown chenille with gleaming metal decorations.

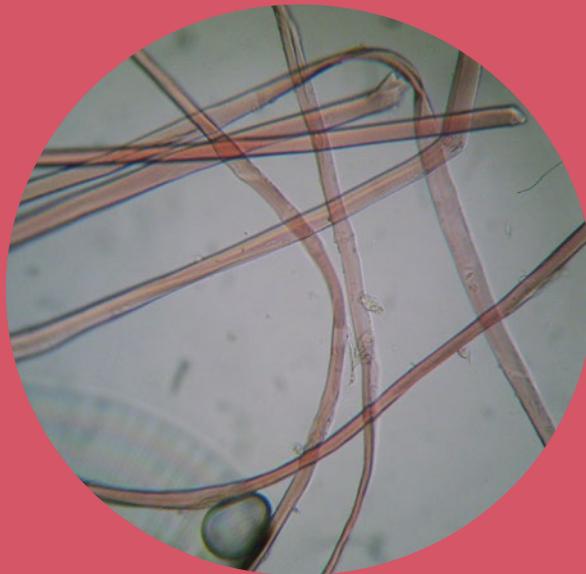
The study of the fabrics was essential to my assessment of the attribution. The identification of fibres showed that they were all 100% silk and thus confirmed the excellent quality of the raw materials.



► The gros-grain ribbon and the clasp: the only point of attachment to the body. ©Marc Plata

▼ Detail of the interior of the lining around the waist. ©Marc Plata





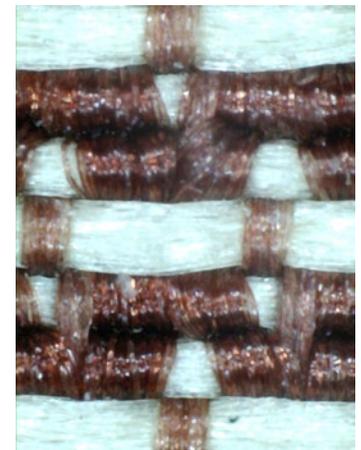
Silk filaments of the velvet pile under the microscope (magnification x 400).
©Marc Plata

The analysis of the weaves produced extremely valuable information, especially with regard to the velvet. The production of velvet is a very slow and complex process and requires high quality materials. This highly prized fabric comes in many different types, varying according to the materials used, the thickness and the length of the pile.

Analysing the weave of the velvet was an arduous task which would not have been possible without the help of Sílvia Saladrigas Cheng, documentalist at the CDMT. I am very grateful to her for her guidance and for her willingness to share her expert knowledge with me.

The analysis showed that the velvet used was one of the finest: none other than Lyons velvet, renowned worldwide for its softness, its thickness and its short pile. The weave, in this case with a double pile warp, creates a dense, iridescent surface, with a short pile that is well anchored to the base fabric. My research indicated a clear connection between this high quality velvet and the figure of Charles Frederick Worth.

The surface of the velvet before the treatment, where the thickness of the pile can be seen.
©Marc Plata



Velvet's weave (magnification x 40).
©Marc Plata

In the middle of the nineteenth century the Emperor Napoleon III was eager to reactivate the French economy, as his uncle fifty years had done beforehand. One of the measures he adopted was to promote the silk industry by encouraging the use of the fabric for new purposes, not just to upholster walls and furniture. Worth, couturier to the Empress Eugénie of Montijo, was called on to make abundant use of silk, but in fact he already had a special predilection for it. In 1870, due to the strong demand, the number of looms in Lyon had doubled since the opening of the House of Worth in 1858. There is also evidence that several silk-makers in the city sent Worth their samples for approval before starting production. Thus, the fact that the train is made of Lyon velvet reinforces the hypothesis that it was made at number 7 Rue de la Paix in Paris.

As for the satin, although it does not have a characteristic weave like the velvet, it is a Duchess satin with a high thread count and body. It was used in high quality linings and gowns.

The embroidery also provided useful technical and historical information. It is known that lilacs were very much in fashion in Europe in the late nineteenth century, especially in France. The prolific French flower breeder Pierre Louis Victor Lemoine (1823-1911) created many of the 200 or so varieties of lilac that we know today. As a result of his success, the term *French lilac* is used to refer to all kinds of double flower lilac and the flower appears in many artistic representations of the time, for example in paintings by the Impressionists. So, in a symbolic way, its presence adds further support to the French origin of the train.

The flowers, embroidered directly on the velvet, are adorned with small, many-sided balls and round discs. The leaves and stalks are made of cotton thread, giving the embroidery volume and weight.

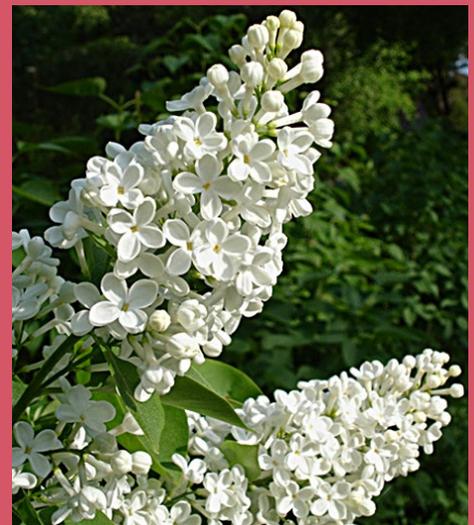
The study of the threads produced some interesting results. As we were unable to take a sample for chemical analysis, the state of preservation and the surface were sources of valuable information. Through a comparison between the different materials and historical research into the development of metal threads we hypothesised that the embroidery was made with silver-plated copper, because the silver surface of the four threads bears specks of green caused by the rusting of the copper and because of the reddish surface in the more eroded parts of the embroidery.

This finding might be seen as an argument against the attribution of the piece to Worth, since he always used materials of the highest quality. Nonetheless, the bibliography search showed that in the Middle Ages threads of noble metals began to disappear because of their price, their scarcity and (especially in the



Comparison between a purple lilac flower and the embroidery. Next to it, the white Madame Lemoine variety, which bears a strong resemblance to the motif of the train.

Source: Wikimedia Commons



Source: Wikimedia Commons



Various close-up images of the embroidery showing the different types of metal threads. ©Marc Plata. [See more.](#)

case of silver) the fragility of the metal. Because of this, threads made of noble metals practically disappeared in Europe from the sixteenth century onwards. Therefore, high quality metal embroidery such as the work we find in the train was made with other metals plated in gold or silver which produced more malleable, less brittle threads.

Detail of one of the embroidered flowers, demonstrating the quality of the work. ©Marc Plata



From Hélène Koechlin to the store-rooms of the CDMT

The train was offered to the CDMT in 1996 by Dominique Miraille. The acquisition is recorded in a report written by Sílvia Carbonell, the current director of the museum and at that time the museum's conservator-restorer and historian. The report was based on the information provided by M. Miraille, and on the observation of the piece. The following fragments are of particular interest:

“The state of preservation of the piece is excellent [...] So far we have not been able to confirm that it is from Worth's workshop, although this is certainly a possibility. We have been able to date the piece precisely because we know the exact dates of Louis Andrieux's short period as French ambassador to the Spanish court in 1882. The dress would most certainly have been worn at court, and probably only once or on a very few occasions, as the train has hardly any signs of wear.”

During my research I contacted Dominique Miraille once again, who very kindly told me more about the piece, even though almost twenty years had passed since the sale. The most interesting information is summarised here:

“The Koechlin family, who sold me the court train, were from Toulouse. They were the family of the composer (the descendants, of course). That's all I can tell you about the origin of the piece! As for Worth: All the dresses and other garments in that house were by CF Worth. I presume this piece was as well. That's my opinion, looking at the style, the fabrics used and the embroidery – all of the highest quality. But I can't tell you any more about this piece, I'm sorry.”

These two sources provide invaluable information about the origin of the train. The report tells us that the owner of the train was Hélène Koechlin, the wife of Louis Andrieux. We also know that it belongs to the period when Andrieux was French ambassador to Spain, in 1882. It is described as a “court train”, which identifies its function inside its owner's wardrobe.

Miraille tells us that he obtained it in Toulouse, in a house where there were several other pieces made by Worth. This interesting information gives us an important context. As Miraille states, the materials were of such high quality that he attributed it to Worth. Obviously, his criterion as an expert was reliable; but, as Sílvia Carbonell said in the report, there was no evidence to confirm it. A

2 “So I was not a total stranger to Spain when I arrived in the first days of April 1882” [p. 300] ANDRIEUX, Louis (1926) *À travers la république*. Editorial Payot. Paris.

study of the Koechlin family tree revealed that the French composer mentioned by Miraille was Charles Louis Eugène Koechlin, Hélène Koechlin’s first cousin.

As regards the function of the train, there are many reasons for believing that it was worn at court. Court trains were worn as symbols of status and respect at events such as receptions, royal marriages and coronations. The train was usually worn at the waist, always on top of the dress, which was often not made of the same fabric. The trains were lavishly decorated and were more important than the dresses themselves. Today, queens still wear these long trains or gowns at coronations and official events.

It was not until the 1850s that the train began to be worn from the shoulders, a development attributed directly to Worth [Philip Mansel, 2005]. The train was worn in different ways in different countries. For example, in England it was usually draped over one arm as a sign of respect while in France it was allowed to trail along the ground, also as a sign of respect. Broadly speaking, the length was an indicator of social status: the longer the train the higher the wearer’s rank. At the Spanish court the length might vary depending on the marital status of the wearer, although some of the reports are contradictory. Therefore, in view of its characteristic form and the excellent state of preservation the idea that it was a court train rather than the train of a more normal dress gains fresh support.

According to Miraille, this court train was brought to Spain by Hélène Koechlin; so let’s look at her life and the reasons why she came to Spain. Hélène Koechlin (1851-1928) was married to Louis Andrieux (1840-1931), her second (and rather temperamental) husband, with whom she had three children. She always accompanied her husband, who held various positions during his political career, including that of French ambassador to Spain, a post he accepted due to his good relations with Spain during his time as prefect of police in Paris. He decided to accept the honour conferred on him as a temporary mission, for six months. “Je n’étais donc pas tout à fait étranger à l’Espagne quand j’y arrivai dans les premiers jours d’avril 1882” he writes in his book.

The press of the day has also provided invaluable information, because it followed M. Andrieux’s trajectory from the moment he was appointed, his arrival in Spain, and his short but intense stay in Madrid. Receptions and visits occupied a large part of his time. “Be as Spanish as you can”, said his friend Ruiz Zorrilla, and Andrieux did his best to follow this advice.

In his book Andrieux tells how impressed he was by his welcome. The Duke of Fernan Nuñez (the Spanish ambassador to France) and his wife did him the honour of travelling from Paris to receive him in Madrid. He was invited to a

La reina de la soirée, fué sin disputa alguna, lo que de d'erecho lo es de la belleza en París: he nombrado á la señora de Arellano. Ataviada con exquisito gusto, presos sus rubios cabellos en rica diadema de brillantes, ostentando un vestido de Worth, que parecia tomado al guarda-ropa de la princesa de Lambelle, sabiendo llevar la lindísima toilette Wateau cual si hubiera sido dama predilecta de la fundadora de Trián. La señora de Arellano, por su hermosura, por su cortesía, por su distincion, por su donaire, devolvía á España la honra de representarla.

Paris 21 de marzo de 1882.—P. de P.

La Opinión newspaper, on 4 April 1882.

3 “This support was most valuable to me; the French ambassador was examined at court in the salons, like a dog at the vet”. [p. 300] ANDRIEUX, Louis (1926) *À travers la république*. Editorial Payot. Paris.

great reception, dinner and ball with the city’s elite. “Ce haut parrainage me fut précieux car d’instinct l’ambassadeur de la République était tenu en observation à la Cour et dans les salons, comme un chien chez le vétérinaire”³. For an event of this kind, attended by the Spanish king, certain matters of protocol had to be followed; for example, the ladies were to wear a court train. Thus, accepting Dominique Miraille’s premise that the train was worn at the Spanish court between these dates, Hélène Koechlin may have worn it at this first official reception (described with great excitement by Andrieux, at which the couple were presented to King Alfonso XII and Queen Maria Cristina) and would have ordered it previously from Worth.

It is difficult to find any references that link Worth directly with Hélène Koechlin. Nevertheless, there is a fragment from an article that does seem to suggest a connection. Worth was the first great international fashion designer and caused a furore for more than thirty years; the ladies of high society queued up to hire his services. Mme Andrieux fitted the social profile perfectly, and her elegance and distinction was described in the press of the day.

The following account appears in *La Carta a Paris*, dated 21 March 1882 and published in *La Opinión* on 4 April, shortly before the Andrieux moved to Madrid. The report says that Louis Andrieux organised a spectacular dinner at their home in honour of Sr. Arellano, the Spanish *chargé d’affaires*, which was attended by several members of parliament. At the end of the article, the reporter refers to the “queen of the soirée”, the wife of Sr. Arellano; she was wearing a magnificent dress made by Worth “which seemed to have been taken from the wardrobe of the Princess of Lambelle”. This seemingly unimportant information provides us with a link between Worth and Hélène Koechlin.

Many ladies commissioned Worth to make their dresses on the occasion of their presentation at European courts. Some of them were Americans who were eager to make a good impression in the old continent, and for this reason today European *haute couture* is well represented in the museums of the



Above, the dress worn by Frances Fairchild; below, the House of Worth label sewn into the bodice
©Wisconsin Historical Museum
object. Rec. no.: 1945.960,a





In the first image, Frances Fairchild in Madrid in 1880, wearing the dress made by Worth. In the second, an interesting photograph taken around 1895, in which Frances Fairchild (right) wears the dress while posing with her daughter Caryl (left), also wearing a court dress. The photo was probably taken in Madison, Wisconsin, where they lived. ©Wisconsin Historical Museum. Images: WHi-47621/WHi-476191

United States. Frances Fairchild (1845-1924), a contemporary and probably an acquaintance of the Andrieux, is of particular interest to us. She was the wife of the governor of Wisconsin, Lucius Fairchild, who was sent as American consul to France in 1872. In 1880 the couple were living with their daughters in Paris, and early that year they were told that they were to move to Madrid, where Mr Fairchild had been appointed minister plenipotentiary in Spain. For her presentation before the Spanish king and queen, Mrs Fairchild placed an order with Worth, who designed a court dress using his favourite cloth, lilac velvet, combined with a lavender-coloured satin. Mrs Fairchild kept the dress until the year of her death in 1924 and both the dress and the documentation are now housed at the Museum of Wisconsin.

Mr Fairchild gave up his post in late 1881 and the family returned to the United States in February of the following year, just when Louis Andrieux was appointed French ambassador to Spain. It is highly possible that the two diplomats would have been introduced in Paris, and perhaps their families would also have met.



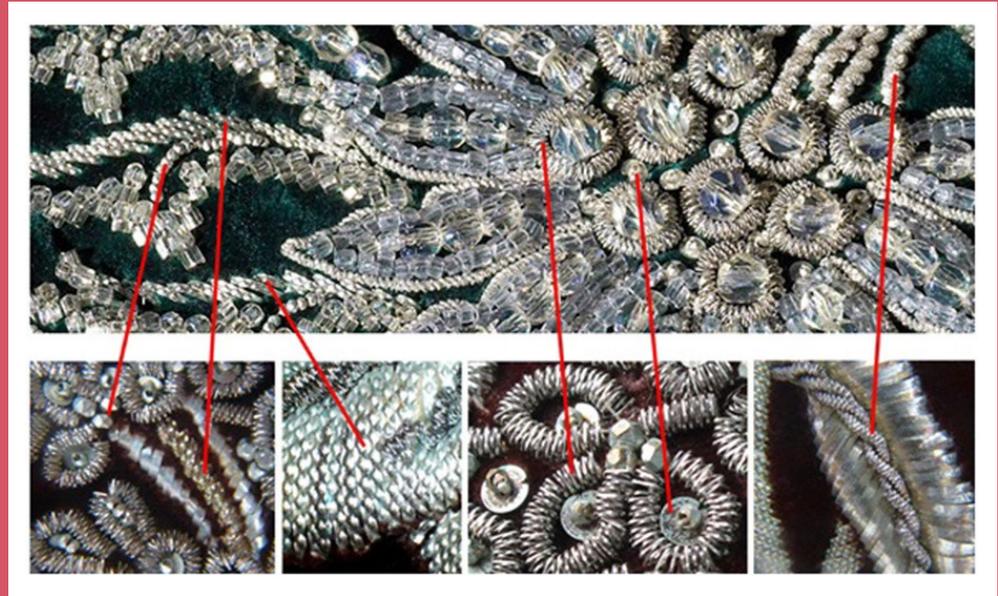
Image in profile, showing the white moiré skirt, train and emerald green velvet green bodice, corded at the back. ©Indianapolis Museum of Art. [See more.](#)

The resemblance between our train and Mrs Fairchild's dress is undeniable – especially the bodice, which is finished in lace and uses almost identical materials. Although this dress appears longer, there is probably little difference in the measurements. The photographs show that this dress bears the label inside the bodice. This may explain the absence of a label in the train; the train was considered part of an ensemble, and the label may have been attached to one of the other pieces. This is another argument in favour of the attribution to Worth: studies of photographs of Worth's creations show that most of them bore the label inside the bodice.

Worth also dressed royalty, including the Russian royal family. This magnificent green velvet dress belonged to the Russian princess Maria Maximilianova Romanovskya of Leuchtenberg (1841-1914) and dates approximately from 1888. The dress comprised a white moiré skirt, a bodice and an emerald green train measuring some 3.65 metres. It is embroidered all around the train and in part of the bodice with transparent glass balls, sequins and strips of silver (metal thread). Made in the traditional Russian style, this court dress was acquired by the Indianapolis Museum of Art in 2006 in an auction. It is a clear example of how the great designers, including Worth, had to adapt their creativity to the official norms established at each court. Even so, the piece bears some similarities to the dress of Frances Fairchild, such as the pleating around the gown and the general structure in the form of a narrow laced bodice. All the indications are that the CDMT's train might have had a dress of similar characteristics.

Apart from the general resemblance, the high quality of the images of the embroidery shows that the train that Worth made for the Russian princess

Comparison between the embroidery in the train of the Russian princess (above) and in different parts of the train of H el ene Koechlin. The resemblances are very clear.
 ©Indianapolis Museum of Art
 i ©Marc Plata



shares several elements with our train, such as the lilacs. This is a further indication that the two garments most likely came from the same workshop.

This is the sum of the evidence that I was able to gather during my final degree project. Of course a conclusive attribution is very difficult; in fact the aim of the study was just to piece together all the possible indications that the train might contain. Nonetheless the evidence found provides a sound basis for the attribution, especially with regard to the materials, whose extremely high quality is reflected in the final result and also in the present state of preservation of the piece after so many years. In addition, the notable similarities with the court gowns made by Worth provide firm support for my hypothesis that the train was worn at a reception or at another event at court, either in Spain or elsewhere.

Future studies of the train could compare it directly with other pieces made by the designer and dated to the same era, in order to see the similarities between the fabrics and the execution, and to analyse the dyes and metals used in the embroidery. And from the historical perspective, it would be fascinating to find a photograph of Mme Andrieux to gain an idea of her physical appearance.

The band that covers the right arm and the bust remains something of a mystery since I have not found any references (either visual or written) either in court gowns or ordinary dresses. The function of this fairly unusual design was most likely to cover part of the low neckline typical of court dresses. As I mentioned above, designers were constricted by court etiquette and had to adapt to the requirements of their clientele – as both these designs demonstrate (and especially the Russian one). But if we observe the creations of Worth when he was not under these restraints there is an element that appears repeatedly: the presence of the label only on the bodice, where Worth would insert a ribbon bearing his name around the waist. This may be why the train preserved at the CDMT lacks his signature. ●

46 Years of the Shenkar College of Engineering and Design.

A successful formula combining teaching and industry

by SILVIA JAPKIN SZULC and DANIEL YACUBOVICH.

Photographs by SÍLVIA JAPKIN and DANIEL YACUBOVICH

Between 1979 and 1982 I studied Textile Design at the [Shenkar College of Engineering and Design](#), a period that left a profound mark on my life as both a professional and an artist. The experience was enriching, opened my eyes to new perspectives and conceptions of design, and allowed me to acquire a fundamental grasp of art, technology and history that forms the basis of my current knowledge.

Much of this personal enrichment was thanks to the international staff who taught my classes, including Nora Frenkel, a Chinese-born plastic artist, who had lived in New York and Tel Aviv, Tessa Smith, from Bristol in the UK, who directed the Department of Textile Design, Hana Krakover, Tamar Eitan and Neora Warshawsky, Israeli teachers of printing, knitting and weaving design;

Facade of the Shenkar College of Engineering and Design.





Entrance hall of the Shenkar College of Engineering and Design.

and Abraham Vailer, a staunchly Bauhaus teacher from the Netherlands who introduced us to the theory of form and colour, and much more besides.

It was my teacher of textile printing – Abbie Rotbart, from New York – who really opened the doors for Daniel and me. She put us in touch with other professionals at the school so we could write this article. Once arrangements had been made, we returned on a visit to Shenkar and reminisced about our time there.

The knowledge I gained at Shenkar shaped the tools I used to move into the Catalan textile industry. When Daniel and I arrived in Catalonia, in 1982, we created the Silvia&Daniel design studio, offering designs to companies in Sabadell, Terrassa, Mataró, Premià de Mar and Barcelona, and to others throughout Spain and Europe. I got in touch with the CDMT, which in 1990 hosted an exhibition of my work.

Thirty-four years after graduating, I proposed writing this article for Datatèxtil, to pay tribute to the internationally renowned Shenkar College, whose management model – based on those of similar institutions in the English-speaking world – places great importance on sponsorship and close collaboration with business and industry. Shenkar is a higher education institution specialising in design, which began its journey exclusively in the field of textiles, much like the ESDI in Sabadell. Today it offers tuition in multiple disciplines, including interior design, industrial design, jewellery design,



Printing workshop at the Shenkar College of Engineering and Design.

graphic design, and, of course, textile design, with specialisations in printing, weaving, knitting, fashion and interior design. The school also runs courses in technology and engineering.

In the summer of 2016, Daniel and I visited the graduate exhibition of work by students from the College's different departments. Over some four hours we were impressed again and again by the descriptions of final projects in all of the possible specialisations. During our visit, Abbie put us in touch with the director of the school archive, Tal Amit, with whom we arranged an interview, and we also met and talked with Youval Etzioni, a historian and teacher at Shenkar.

Historical overview

On a warm morning, in a bar facing the Mediterranean, we met with the historian and teacher Youval Etzioni. It was an enriching conversation, on the origins and the present-day of the production, aesthetics and economics of the local textile industry. To understand the current situation in Israel, Youval suggested looking at three facets.

Since the beginning of the twentieth century, there have been huge waves of immigration to Israel, and with every decade aesthetic influences have radiated from different parts of the world to the local textile and handicrafts industries. In establishing the Betzalel School of Fine Arts in 1909, its founder Betzalel Shats introduced a European ideology that merged with the local mentality of the Eastern Hebrew population, with its allusions to traditional Biblical symbols and the landscapes of the Holy Land. Until around 1935, these influences were mainly of Russian and Polish origin, manifested in textiles whose aesthetics combined aspects of Art Nouveau and Art Deco with motifs from Eastern Semitic ornamentation.



Design by Leo Khan:
Tower of David in Jerusalem.

Facet 1. It all began at the outset of the twentieth century, before the creation of the State, with the establishment of frameworks for education and vocational training. This brought into being, for example, women-only training workshops for the production of handmade decorative carpets, influenced by the Arts and Crafts movement and incorporating motifs of mythological sites, such as the Tower of David in Jerusalem.

Facet 2. Built around industry and production methods; factories that were established in the 1920s and 1930s, founded by Jews from the city of Łódź (Poland), such as the great company *Lodzía*, which was owned by the industrialist Arieh Shenkar.

In 1934, Jews from Czechoslovakia created the most technologically advanced factory in the Middle East, [ATA](#). Until the late 1960s it remained a leading company in the production of spun fabrics, as well as everyday and quality work clothing, and a style of dress that portrayed the value of skilled



Design by Leo Khan: Jaffa Port.

labour, as defined within the bounds of Socialist ideology. The materials were cottons, knits and twills, in raw, white, khaki and mechanical blue. A “revival” outlet of this company has recently been opened in Tel Aviv, reproducing retro designs and the corporate logo.

In the 1940s, German immigrants founded new textile companies, predominantly in major urban centres.

The year 1954 was a turning point for textiles and fashion in Israel, which had gone largely unremarked until that time. Key figures in the change, Ruth Dayan and fashion designer Fini Laintersdorf, introduced a new concept of textiles under the brand name *Maskit*, producing women’s fashion collections that were available only through their exclusive outlets in major cities across the country. New designs were modelled at fashion shows. The designers strived to employ women, recent immigrants from Yemen and the countries of the Maghreb, who worked as weavers to manufacture modern fashions with ethnic influences. The designs were created by Fini Laintersdorf, Roji Ben Yosef, Ziona Shimshi and other collaborators.

An essential aspect of the *Maskit* phenomenon was its target market: mostly North Americans and other affluent consumers from the English-speaking world, who engaged with the project and its oriental aesthetic, which played to prevailing Western tastes. The key elements in this new production were long cotton tunics, polychromatic oriental embroidery, large format *panneaux* print designs with various ornamental motifs, accessorised with jewellery, large pendants and brooches, in metal and stones. The public with whom the *Maskit* project found favour, in the US and the UK, essentially represented the same stratum of society occupied by the founders of Shenkar College.

Facet 3. Artistic. The international textile crisis of the 1980s and 1990s had its effect on the scope of training options at design schools across the globe, including Shenkar, prompting a search for new aesthetic and artistic horizons.



Design by Ziona Shimshi.

Design by Roji Ben Yosef.

[See detail.](#)



Since the 1980s, a significant number of graduates from diverse schools have explored creative possibilities in the fusion of art and design, following the lead of the textile art pioneers of the 1970s, such as Jack L. Larsen and Sheila Hicks in the US, and Magdalena Abakanowicz in Poland. The influence of the Lausanne and later the Łódź Biennale also opened up new vocations among students and creators in the textile field.

As the concept of textile art gained acceptance, the subject was gradually incorporated into the programmes of many design schools, among them Shenkar. Exploration of a new field brought new aesthetics, textile art, “artwear”, and installations dominated by statements of a spatial, material nature.

Freelance designers also created their own design lines and set up independent sales outlets. Today, as a result of globalisation, much of the industrial production is located in East Asia.

From its Origins to Shenkar Today

In the midst of the mass immigration of the 1950s and 1960s, the Government of Israel appointed a commission that in 1968 proposed the creation of a higher education institution for the training of professionals in the fields of textile design and engineering. The Ministry of Education, Finance and Labour became involved in the logistics of forming this new institution, setting up a dedicated committee whose function was to find qualified teaching staff. The search was carried out in the US and Europe through visits to specialised institutions, where many specialists were interviewed, some of whom were hired. Impressed by the project and excited by the prospect of employment, a considerable number of professionals from North America and the UK emigrated to Israel, where they took part in creating the various specialised departments. Shenkar's patrons included educational institutions and textile executives, among them the directors of Marks & Spencer. The institution was inaugurated in October 1970, with five departments: Textile Technology, Production Management, Marketing and Business Administration, Fashion Design and Textile Design.

The school found its home in a building that had formerly served as an ORT technological high school under the name Shenkar, which has been maintained to this day. Arieh Shenkar was one of the country's first textile manufacturers. In 1925, he was the owner of the company *Lodzía* (a pioneer in the formation of the ORT school), later becoming President of the Chamber of Industry. Since that time, the building has been extended dramatically, and various wings bear



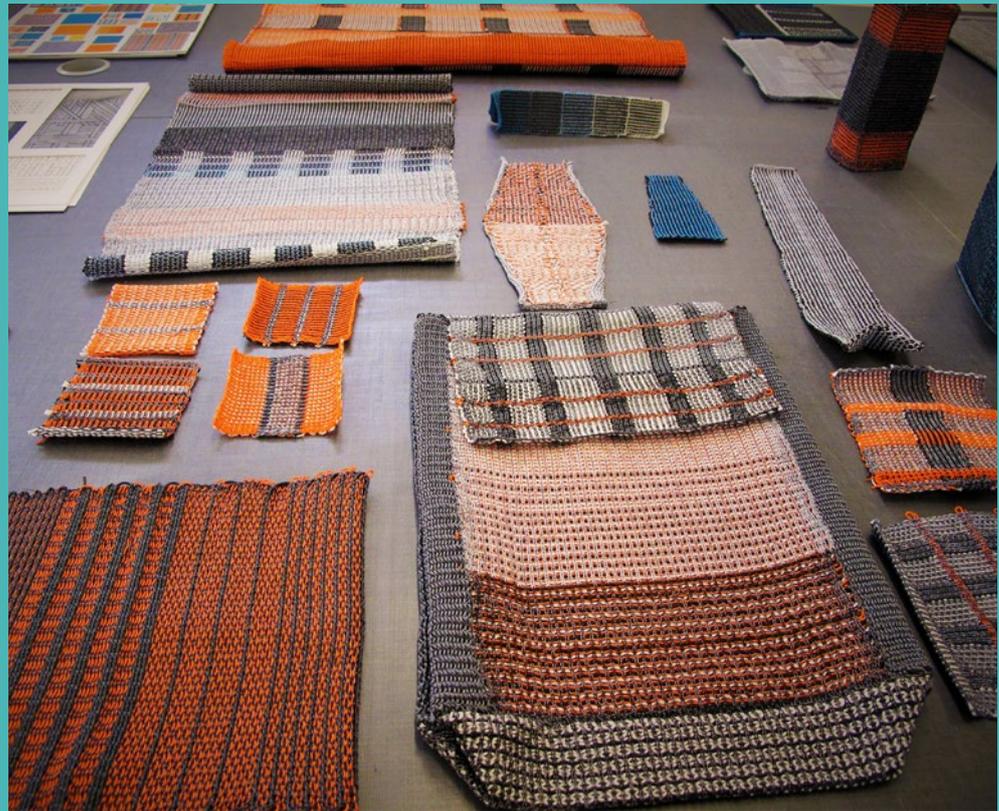
Designs by Shiran Nissan.

the names of different patrons. New buildings opened include those housing the library and archive, while a new archive building is currently being constructed to store the huge volume of textiles and clothing donated from around the world.

Since its beginnings, Shenkar College has always maintained strong links to the textile industries, which have provided finance and supplied resources for applied use in the specialised training it offers. Guided tours of manufacturing facilities have always been a key component of Shenkar's courses, to show how the theory studied at the college is put into practice. Companies typically grant summer scholarships, to enable students in diverse technological and design areas to gain practical experience.

Admission to the school has always been extremely demanding (in my year, 18 students out of a total of 100 applicants were accepted, and just 13 of us completed our studies). Scholarships are mainly awarded by private sponsors (I obtained a scholarship for study materials – this was before computers, and we used many tubes of gouache, papers and brushes). Those of us studying textile and fashion design participated in contests and grant calls held in partnership with industry, and in fact one of my designs was chosen to be marketed by a local company. Some students had the opportunity to work in design studios or textile factories in the US or UK, completing work placements in the summer months. This intense cooperation between the textile industry and the school is a fundamental value of the institution.

During my studies, the degree qualification (BA) was awarded by an American university. Since 1983, Shenkar has awarded the degrees of B.Des and B.Tech, authorised by the national commission for higher studies, which oversees the qualifications framework adhered to by all Israeli higher education institutions.



Designs by Narkis Sharon.

After the international textile crisis in 1995, Shenkar began to build a more multidisciplinary structure, with the creation of the Department of Plastics Engineering, and in 1998 the Department of Jewellery Design was opened. In 2001, Production Management (Textiles) was extended to become Industrial Engineering and Management, and the year 2003 saw Industrial Informatics changed to Computer Engineering. In the 2002-2003 academic year, the departments of Graphic Design, Industrial Design, Interior Design and Electronic Engineering were integrated into the new structure of the Faculty of Design, and all technical departments were joined under the umbrella of the Faculty of Engineering. In 2008, the Department of Multidisciplinary Art was opened.

Today the institution is known as the Shenkar College of Engineering and Design (see www.shenkar.ac.il/en/galleries).

The Graduate Exhibition

The annual exhibition showcasing graduates' work serves as a "letter of introduction" for future professionals looking to move into industry and the commercial sphere. Their projects are presented in different spaces throughout the College, displayed alongside their newly printed business cards. During the exhibition period, the graduates are on hand to meet visitors, to explain their work in greater detail. Teachers from different departments also host guided tours for groups interested in the projects, as we ourselves experienced in the area of industrial design. The graduate exhibition is commonly reported on in the media, the press inevitably focusing on the more innovative and interesting work. The final year Fashion Design exhibition is widely known, with [shows](#) attracting sizeable audiences.

Designs by Daniela Makmil.



Glasses by Yonathan Landsberg.



Design by Maayan Bronfman.



Designs by Shany Abrahamy.

When Daniel and I visited the exhibition, we saw works from Jewellery, Industrial Design, Interior Design, and others, and we could clearly see the influence of aspects of textile theory in the work produced in other disciplines, such as in jewellery and industrial design.

The exhibition devoted to Textile Design was entitled “Material-Action-Prototype”, the accompanying booklet explaining that it aimed to shed light on the richness of textile design in everyday culture and as an aesthetic, material and visual discipline. The designs on display encompassed a great variety of formats: clothing, fabric design, materiality projects, video, experimental processes, crafts, and “smart” objects. The materials employed ranged from the traditional – cottons, wools, fougère, knits and printed fabrics – to the contemporary – plastics and fused materials, 3D printed and “smart” materials, conductive fibres, and so on. The work addresses themes such as the body, its functions, wrappings and textures; a blending of ritual ceremonial elements and their modification and transformation for contemporary life. The exhibition presented a rich synthesis of fusions and the functions of fabric as a cultural material that is both everyday and festive, unworked and elaborate, spiritual and physical, local and global. The main conceptual undercurrents were manifested in the form of alternative skins, anthropometric wrappings that explore aspects of local cultures and their borders, addressing questions such as the route to the object, meditation, the soft monument, deep surface, fusion, morphogenesis and ceremony.

Visit to the Rose Fashion and Textile Archive

The director of the archive, Tal Amit, greeted us with a smile in the lobby of Shenkar College and accompanied us to the building where the archive is currently located. In a space crowded with textiles and clothing, stored in boxes or under white sheets, Tal introduced us to Paulina Jevlevsky, curator and restorer at the archive, which was inaugurated in 1986 by Aliza Baguinsky and Ira Lev. The first major donation the archive received was a collection of textiles and clothing from the Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT) in New York. It currently holds collections from all over the world, including Chimú textiles from Peru, and pieces from Japan, Russia, Hungary, Romania and many other countries. According to Tal Amit, one of the outstanding features of the archive is that, true to its home in a leading design school, it contains a world-class collection of Israeli textiles, acquired through active searching and generous donations.

The textiles in the archive date back to the early twentieth century, including samples from each decade up to the present day. All of the fabrics and clothing, which include accessories such as hats, gloves, buttons and spectacles, have been donated from different parts of the world. According to Tal, one of the core objectives of the archive is to preserve memory and to safeguard historical, anthropological and social values through local and international fabrics and fashion. One feature unique to Israeli textiles lies in the fact that until the 1950s, due to the State's arduous struggle for survival, fashion was absent from everyday manufacturing and aesthetic production. Even so, today the archive seeks to recover artefacts of this industrial and aesthetic practice, which have until recently remained largely unseen by the public.

Recalling his days as a student, Tal explains that it was impossible to gain access to the whole archive. As a fashion student, for example, looking at designs of evening gowns, he might be shown just 30 or 40 examples from which to learn and draw inspiration, along with bags and other accessories. One of the new objectives is therefore to create a digital documentation centre, accessible to students and teachers alike.

In the archive hall, we are shown a large *panneaux* by the artist Bernard Rice. The material is a raw cotton fabric printed in black ink, where the artist displays an expert handling of tonal gradients. For this piece, the landscape is styled after initial woodcut designs (engravings in wood), giving it an expressionistic feel.

Following this, our hosts spread out some woven fabrics by the German artist Leo Khan, who, while living in Germany in 1936, decorated the synagogue of

Design by Bernard Rice.
[See detail.](#)



Bruchsal, which was destroyed by the Nazis on the Night of Broken Glass. Khan emigrated that same year and launched the first Israeli textile printing company in 1937, in the city of Ramat Gan. These fabrics were designed in the years 1936-38.

The first piece shown to us is characteristic as a piece of memory, stamped with woodblocks in monochrome ink. The design shows representations of elements of the national landscape, such as the Tower of David, Haifa Bay and Jaffa Port, among others. The scenes sit adjacent to one another, and looking at the block size used, border composition and the inclusion of some botanical details, we can see that the artist was familiar with and influenced by toile de jouty.

We were also shown a linen fabric, decorated with three-color linoleum prints in red, blue and brown. The designs here are landscapes decorated with



Design by Leo Khan: Kibbutz.

Design by Leo Khan: Haifa Bay.



Design by Yohanan Simon.



vegetal borders and including representations of traditional labour, such as working the fields and fishing.

One of the interesting aspects of archival work, says Tal, is its occasional detective nature, discovering the history behind the textiles, and how they made the journey from the artist into the hands of the owner who donated them.

In the 1940s-50s, the active painter and illustrator Yohanan Simon began to work in textile creation, along with his wife Fini Laintersdorf; the artist also wrote and illustrated children's stories. Possibly this latter activity influenced a fabric displaying two-colour silkscreen prints, with the design featuring figures of a primitive ethnic character. This textile is reminiscent of the time when the artist lived and worked in a kibbutz, an Israeli collective agricultural community.

Fashion

Roji Ben Yosef emigrated from Bulgaria to Israel in 1948, and two years later her family opened a workshop with two embroidery machines, which later became the company *Rikma*. Their work was applied to women's clothing, paving the way for a more modern style of decorative and colourful designs.

In the 1960s, Ben Yosef made contact with the textile company ATA, which was in a production crisis brought by the government's policy to promote the manufacture of household fabrics and fashion, while ATA was largely a producer of spun fabrics. Roji proposed that ATA make a collection of highly



Design by Roji Ben Josef.

Design by Ziona Shimshi.



coloured embroidered fabrics, which her company *Rikma* would then use for fashionable garments. Roji's vision was pioneering in the emergence of a new aesthetic firmly rooted in the culture of her adoptive country: light, materiality, the influence of the clothing of the nomadic Bedouin and Arabs, and of the Jewish immigrants of Yemen, Morocco, Libya and Afghanistan.

In the 1970s, she began a search to find and employ artisans in Arab towns (Hebron, Ramalla) to produce embroidered fabric featuring local folk art, like Hamsa and Kafia motifs and the Bethlehem stars she introduced, with which she styled new fashion lines. In ideological terms, Ben Yosef was a designer who not only sought aesthetic integration with the cultural milieu to which she had emigrated, but also held on to the hope of reconciling cultures through artistic creation.

The new textiles that Roji Ben Yosef developed were highly successful and firmly established her reputation as a leading designer in Israel and on the international stage.



▲ Work by Julia Keyner.
▶ Glasses by Fini Laintersdor.



Ziona Shimshi, an Israeli ceramist and artist, made fabrics for Roji Ben Yosef and for the [Maskit company](#). Today she continues to develop her artistic work and is an active campaigner for human rights.

Julia Keiner, a German artist and designer, founded the Department of Weaving at the Bezalel Art Academy in Jerusalem in 1941, bringing Bauhaus concepts to the teaching and production of woven fabrics, which were used in fashion and interior design.

Fini Laintersdorf, Roji Ben Yosef, Ziona Shimshi and Julia Keiner, whose textile and clothing designs we saw in the archive at Shenkar, are the founding designers of the Israeli textile industry. They embody the longing to reconcile a natural vision of the Middle East with the legacies that each of them, together with other designers in the country's history, brought with them from their native European cultures. ●

**Dedicated to the memory
of my teachers Nora Frenkel and Tessa Smith Agassi**

The pursuit of the new

by ASSUMPTA DANGLA.

Photographs by ESTHER DE PRADES MARIA

¹ *Manuscrit de Jean Rhyner*, 1766, MISE.

² This article is a summary of chapters 1 and 4 of the author's doctoral thesis. DANGLA, Assumpta. *Impressions sobre teixit. Els estampats de la fàbrica La España Industrial de Barcelona (1847-1903)*, supervised by Dr Judith Urbano, Universitat Internacional de Catalunya, Escola Superior d'Arquitectura i Disseny, 2016. <http://goo.gl/pNf72L>.

The success of printed garments hinges on the designs. In choosing these designs, the pursuit of the new has always been the crucial factor, a fact that was clear to the first European manufacturers of printed calicos. With a keen eye on the changing tastes of their customers they aimed to create an attractive product, making choices upon which the future of their production would depend:

Les dessins sont l'âme de l'impression; leur choix est essentiel et leur variété fait le début du fabricant – rien n'est plus difficile que le choix du dessin, parce que on doit réunir dans un dessin deux qualités fort différentes: il doit charmer l'acheteur par son élégance et plaire à l'imprimeur par la facilité de son exécution.¹

The new production systems of the nineteenth century brought a series of changes that strengthened the foundations upon which printed cloth could be marketed and distributed. The original calico manufacturers, who had worked with engraved wooden blocks, were supplanted by large steam-powered factories, in which printing machines with copper-plated cylinders were capable of increasing the production rate by a factor of forty. This, among other developments, caused stock to accumulate in shops and prompted a search for new outlets. The emergence of new trends became more noticeable through the course of the nineteenth century; printed fabric designs began to cross borders, and Catalan manufacturers began to look abroad for new ideas.

One particular case that we have studied is that of the factory *La España Industrial* in Barcelona, the leading cotton-producing public limited company in the Iberian Peninsula in the second half of the nineteenth century and a renowned manufacturer of novel printed textiles.² We have examined how the latest trends reached the factory as they emerged from the leading design centres, through a complex system of circulation and reception of innovations that involved close collaboration between different employees, in particular agents, designers, engravers and management. Further inspiration was gained

Sample of printed fabric with tree of life design (c. 1865), MEPM.



Sample of printed fabric with natural and synthetic dyes (c. 1870), private collection of *Manterol, SA*.



3 The archive of the factory *La España Industrial* has been conserved almost in its entirety and can be consulted at the Premià de Mar Textile Printing Museum and the National Archive of Catalonia.

4 The collections from *La España Industrial* are conserved at the Premià de Mar Textile Printing Museum, in the private collection of *Manterol SA* in Ontinyent (Valencia), at the CDMT and the Design Museum of Barcelona.

through the company's participation in industry events across Europe. The correspondence that the company maintained with its agents is living testimony to this rich and complex exchange,³ as is the work still conserved in public and private collections, which includes fabric samples, swatches, and original patterns and designs.⁴

La España Industrial developed an aesthetic language that was very close to that of the other leading European design centres. This ensured the success of a company that was noted particularly for textiles initially considered a “happy imitation of French fabrics from Rouen and Mulhouse”. During the second half of the nineteenth century, the company worked with some of the foremost French designers and its own team of specialists. The sources of inspiration varied widely. Some designers drew ideas from illustrated notebooks; kinds of dictionaries of ornamentation containing a wide range of themes and motifs that could be incorporated into textile design. The *Musée de l'Impression sur Étoffes* in Mulhouse contains a set of books with ornamental repertoires from the *Société Industrielle de Mulhouse*, which were used in textile design and other



Printed scarf, from a design by Oscar Schmidt (c. 1890), MEPM.

applied arts. Some of the designers who worked for *La España Industrial*, such as Oscar Schmidt, are known to have consulted these notebooks. Specialised in the drawing of original designs for scarves, Schmidt often borrowed collections of iconographic motifs from Pillement and of designs for scarves and **furnishings** from the *Société Industrielle de Mulhouse*. Other sources of inspiration were the trend books sent by design houses to their subscribers. In 1865, *La España Industrial* received a copy of a trend book with samples of French and English prints, and for decades the company subscribed to regular bulletins from the Camille Claude design house, and subsequently that of Claude Frères. In addition, directors and agents bought fabrics abroad, whose novel designs provided further inspiration. For example, one collection of scarves came from the city of Cosmanos, which was particularly renowned for the manufacturing of this item. The surviving examples are now housed in the Premià de Mar Textile Printing Museum.

Much of the success of *La España Industrial* was achieved thanks to forays into markets outside Spain. From the very beginning of the company's activity its designs were entered in major national and international competitions, for which it won numerous honours, including a gold medal at the Paris Universal Exhibition of 1878 and the highest award at the Barcelona Universal Exhibition of 1888. The many events in which the company took part were a great showcase for its products and provided a network of invaluable contacts, through which it gained direct knowledge of the latest fashions around Europe.

The company's agents played a key role as product advisors. They determined current needs, provided information on the latest innovations abroad, and identified the designs that were selling well, the most popular colours, and the



Consumption records for dyes, with printed samples for furnishings and clothing (c. 1880), MEPM. [See more.](#)

products that were having most success on the market and could be found in the shop windows of Paris. One of these agents was Charles Ventrillon; a multi-faceted professional who worked for *La España Industrial* for several decades. He started out as a designer, interpreting designs that were sent from abroad, and later settled in France. His mission varied widely: he worked as a designer, copyist, imitator, and correspondent about the political situation in Paris (in times of conflict, he sent correspondence and original designs via air balloon), and was also involved in industrial espionage.

Agents in Spain established direct relationships with customers, becoming uniquely familiar with their changing tastes. Every province had specific needs that reflected the climate in the region, its social classes and the prevailing trends. In 1888, the travelling salesman José Vidal i Calsina sent a wealth of information from Igualada, El Vendrell, Tortosa, Reus, Valls, Tàrraga, Manresa, Lleida, Montblanc and other locations in Catalonia, illustrating the degree of effort put into beating the competition. The correspondence shows that he analysed local businesses and sent samples from other manufacturers and wholesale fabric prices to the company. He tried to find out which design houses supplied the shops; they included Ricart y Cia., Serra y Bertrand, Achon, Carroggio, Juan Batlló, José Ferrer y Vidal, Manuel Bertrand, Antonio Tort, Hijos de P. Martí Palmerola and Pedro Paloma. Agents also monitored the wider market. For example, Pascual Sánchez, who lived in Valencia, had a close relationship with the company's management, and provided valuable information on customers tastes. On one occasion, he recommended that the Maties Muntadas that he should visit Valencia to discover the preferences of buyers first-hand.

Detail of a roller-printing machine, MEPM.



Other professionals who introduced innovations were the engravers of copper-plated cylinders for the printing machines. They often sent fragments of original designs and textiles by post, with detailed indications about colours and printing systems. The company managers personally supervised the integration of new models, requested any necessary amendments and finally sent the designs to be engraved. The Nathan & Stington workshop in Manchester had a long relationship with *La España Industrial*, and for decades sent cards with printed samples and technical notes regarding the colour pastes and the type of engraving that best suited each drawing. The managers' training and judgement was crucial in the selection of designs. They knew that they needed to compete with other Spanish manufacturers, and that it was essential to make continuous progress. They monitored the competition, altering their own designs when this was deemed necessary, and strived to launch their collections before the other manufacturers. Strict conditions were imposed on the engravers who, for example, had to agree to send their cylinders to *La España Industrial* before they were distributed anywhere else in the Peninsula, so that the company would maintain an advantage over its competitors. In addition, the company insisted on attending all printing tests, to ensure that samples could not be sent to competitors without their knowledge.

The incorporation of new models and the monitoring of customer tastes were strategically important, and production rate was also a key factor in driving sales. *La España Industrial* was so concerned with the rapid changes in trends that, if a design no longer coincided with the latest fashion, it would cancel the order and print only a small selection of the various drawings received. The management was insistent on this point, no doubt out of a concern to increase



Original design for clothing, attributed to Benoît Picard (c. 1860), MEPM.



5 Record of correspondence, 20 May 1868, addressed to the designers *Petitdemagne & Doriot* in Mulhouse, National Archive of Catalonia.

6 *La España Industrial. Contratos de servicios (1847-1853)*, 14 January 1954, MEPM.

sales. Customers requested “*dibujos modernos*” (modern designs) or designs “*de la más alta novedad*” (of the greatest novelty). These terms were made abundantly clear to designers, most of them based in Mulhouse and Paris, and detailed instructions were regularly sent by the company’s management. This characterised production in the second half of the nineteenth century, as revealed by correspondence from the period: “*nous ne manquerez pas de chercher la nouveauté & la beauté des formes dans cetttes collections*”.⁵

Benoît Picard, from Rouen, was one of the first designers whose creations were regularly purchased. The contract that he signed with *La España Industrial* contained several strict conditions. He could not create designs for any other manufacturer in Spain, he had to be present when the rollers were engraved with the final design, and he had to produce his work with great speed:

“*Sr. Picard is obliged and committed to sending exclusively to the Srs. Muntadas an exact copy of the drawings that the aforementioned Picard creates for manufacturers in Rouen and other places in France, and he cannot create designs for any other manufacturer in Spain even through any French commissions he may receive.*”⁶



Original design for textile printing,
by Joan Rabadà Vallbé (c. 1900),
MEPM.

7 Record of correspondence,
25 August 1860, ANC.

The company also asked Eugène Bretegnier from Alsace to send new ideas from Mulhouse and, above all, to maintain the utmost confidentiality:

“Notre ami Mr. Ventrillon nous a appris que vous avez assez de confiance en nous pour venir en Espagne sans vous avoir singé un engagement, dans lequel les principales conditions du contrat furent établies. [...] vous resterez obligé à travailler les heures acoutumées, à garder le secret de toutes les operations de la fabrique, à dedier tout votre talent et votre assiduité au meilleur accomplissement des devoirs de votre place.”⁷

Bretegnier was paid for the designs that he had created. However, designers could be either creators or “arrangers”. During the cotton famine at the start of the 1860s, the drop in sales meant that much of the output came from the specialised department of *La España Industrial*. In the design workshop were the Catalans Evaristo Clotas and Joan Rabadà Vallbé, as well as the Frenchman Charles Ventrillon. They created their own designs or “arranged” those of others. This was a time of discreet modernity and little variability, though exceptions did exist, such as a series of fabrics for interiors printed with

figurative, romantic compositions attributed to Joan Rabadà, which are notable for the quality of the artwork. During the 1870s, Charles Ventrillon played a key role, along with Joan Rabadà, as a creator and an arranger. Both tasks required intuition and a certain vision of the future to produce designs that would be in line with emerging tastes and to anticipate changes in the market.

Designers who were based abroad proposed ideas and received minutely detailed instructions from the management on the kinds of motifs, the measurements, the colours and the layout that were required. Communication with the company was fluid and continual, through written correspondence, foreign trips by the managers, or visits to Barcelona by the designers. Purchases in France were made for “*muebles*” in particular: fabrics for interior decoration. For example, in 1870 the designers E. Heussler and Jules Bildlingmeyer, from Alsace, were asked to follow the style of fabrics created by Koechlin Frères, one of the most famous manufacturers of printed textiles in Mulhouse, and five years later the same was asked of the designers Jacques Ammann and Henry Ast. These were well-known designers who maintained close contact with the company. In the 1870s, some designers from Alsace set up in Paris, and at the end of the decade the French capital had become the leading centre of original designs for printed textiles.

In 1886 *La España Industrial* began to establish contacts with a network of foreign designers. Two years later, the company’s chief in-house designer, Joan Rabadà, travelled to Buenos Aires. Both 1886 and 1888 saw the incorporation of designs from some of the most prestigious design houses in Paris. The Édouard Sins studio, located on the Boulevard Montmartre, supplied to several Catalan manufacturers and was a regular collaborator of *La España Industrial*: Maties Muntadas Rovira, then the factory’s director, gave Sins carte blanche to provide “*nouveaux dessins à votre goût en y apportant toute la variété possible*”. In this period, then, just as indispensable as the pursuit of the new was the search for variety.

The last years of the nineteenth century saw an increase in the use of designs in the Art Nouveau style as a strategy to boost sales. In 1887, Maties Muntadas sent a telegram informing the company that he had come across a new designer in Paris, Petitdemagne, who he would later commission to create “*vraies nouveautés*”. A series of textiles with quintessentially Art Nouveau floral motifs and a collection drawing on printed velvets by Alphonse Mucha are attributed to this French designer. This new style was presented to the company’s shareholders as a winning strategy and successfully generated considerable dividends.

Sample of printed fabric based on a design by E. Sins (1884), MEPM.



Sample of printed fabric inspired by the work of Alphonse Mucha (c. 1905), private collection of *Mantero, SA*.



To sum up, with the help of a wide range of agents and designers, and a markedly international outlook, *La España Industrial* attained a privileged position in the industry, precisely because its managers knew how to assimilate the latest trends in textile printing and adapt them to their customers' tastes, using a complex system of creating and selecting new designs founded in the interplay between invention and reproduction, between creation and imitation. ●

The unsustainability of fast fashion

by SUSANA TOBOSO CHAVERO ,
environmental scientist and fashion designer.
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The fashion sector

Europe has hundreds of companies and brands that employ thousands of designers, numerous prestigious design schools, new emerging designers, a thriving research sector, famous museums and renowned professionals. However, textile production itself continues to be Asia's domain. Textile imports to Europe grow year on year, and countries like China, Bangladesh and India make the clothes we buy from multinational corporations. Fashion is one of the most globalised industries in terms of design, chain of production and sales. A pair of trousers, for example, might have been designed in Barcelona but manufactured in Bangladesh from fabric produced in China; it might take a month for them to be shipped back to Barcelona, only to be sent to New York to be sold. It is hardly surprising, then, that the fashion industry is second only to the petroleum industry in the volume of pollution it generates.

More than 80,000 million garments are sold globally every year, and over 75% of clothes that are thrown away end up in landfills. A fifth of the toxins discharged into the world's waters are from the textile industry, which uses billions of litres of water to make all kinds of garments. Oceans are crowded with vessels that leave the ports of Shanghai and Hong Kong overflowing with containers of clothes made by the multinationals that dominate the market and the high streets of large European cities.

The structure of multinationals

The fashion industry is a long, tangled chain of production that involves extracting the raw materials, manufacturing the fabric, making the garment, transporting it, advertising and selling it, using it and finally recycling or disposing of it. The vast majority of multinationals and – since they mimic their larger counterparts – many small and medium-sized businesses work in the same way.

Fast fashion is generally accepted to have originated in the Inditex group, which revolutionised how clothes are distributed, manufactured and sold. The classic spring-summer and autumn-winter collections have given way to



a continuous production of new garments and new collections, which arrive in stores every week. This has had a direct impact on consumption, design, manufacturing and on all the agents involved in the various areas of the sector.

At the consumer level, the perception of buying clothes has changed: where once it might have been normal to buy sweater, a jacket or any other garment for the coming season, for some it is increasingly common to buy clothes on a weekly basis. Fashion is seen as a disposable commodity that is less durable and more affordable and has less added value than it once had. Clothes have become cheaper and companies need to produce them more cheaply, so they relocate production to countries like China, India or Bangladesh, where labour is cheaper and there is little or no environmental legislation or protection of workers' rights. Garments are more affordable so we buy more of them, and the revenue for businesses increases; at the same time, there is less social justice and more pollution in the countries where these garments are manufactured. It is a wheel that keeps spinning, growing more unwieldy over time.



At the company level, a similar operating cycle is used, as summarised in the figure below:

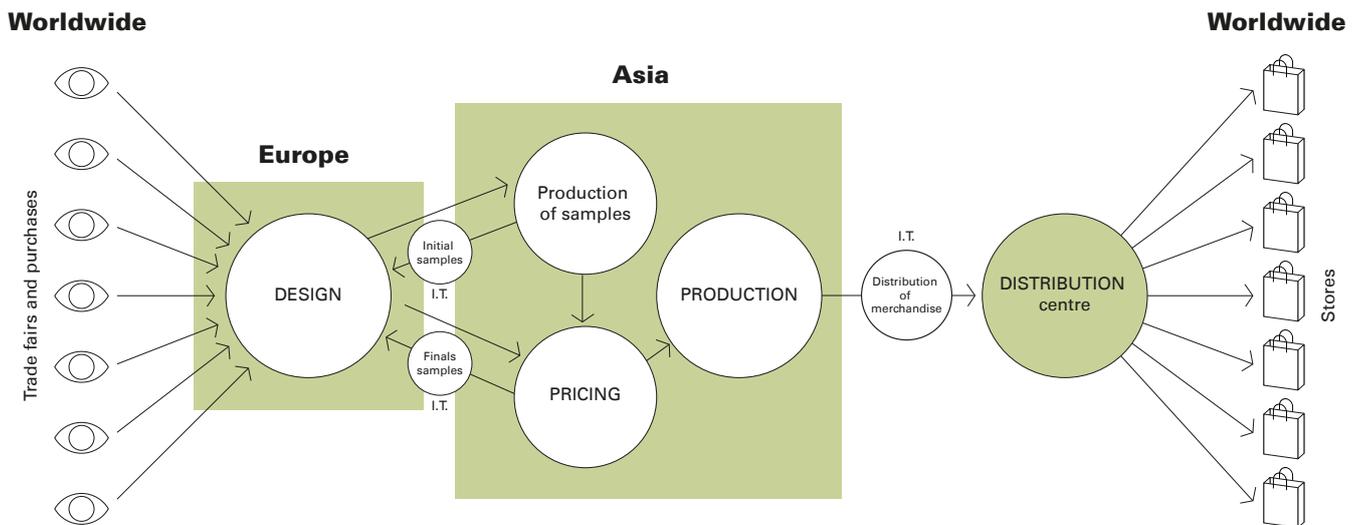


Figure 1. Stages in multinationals' operations. I.T.: International transport

All collections begin with designers travelling to international fashion and textile fairs and to the world's major capital cities, where they buy hundreds of garments and attempt to reproduce the trends being set by the main fashion houses. The information they gather is used to design the collections, and prospective suppliers send their proposals as samples to the design headquarters, which are usually located in Europe. Pieces are chosen for manufacture and entire teams of buyers and designers travel to the country of origin, which might be China or Bangladesh, to negotiate prices. These trips are usually physically and mentally exhausting for the buyers and designers and for



the suppliers who will later make the garments. Negotiations are arduous, the parties meeting in small hotel rooms for some 14-16 hours a day to determine how the supplier can deliver perfect production at the lowest possible cost.

Once the prices are settled, the supplier sends more samples to be approved for production. Consignments are shipped, as this is the cheaper option; they are only sent by air when they are particularly urgent, and often at the cost of suppliers if the delay is their responsibility. Once the garments arrive at the distribution centre, they are delivered to stores all over the world.

This cycle is not just repeated twice a year but occurs every time a new collection is conceived, which usually means every month, or even sometimes every two or three weeks.

The role of women in the fashion sector

Women are the backbone of the textile sector, except in the case of senior posts, which are still generally held by men. The vast majority of European multinationals and Asian companies are managed by men, while most of their workers are women. Demands are particularly high, especially for women, who are the lowest paid fashion workers but have the longest hours and are expected to be constantly available to prioritise work over family life. Between 75% and 80% of multinationals' employees are women, and their situations are



often difficult. By law, women are entitled to maternity leave and, optionally, to a reduction in working hours for a number of years after childbirth. The reality can be quite different, however, as some workers do not take up the maternity leave they are entitled to for fear of losing their jobs. Others reduce their working hours but find that, in time, the company suggests they return to a full working day and, in some cases, even tries to reach an agreement with the worker so that she leaves the company. These are not isolated incidents, they reflect common practices that are considered entirely normal by the multinationals in question. Many women do not dare to exercise their legal rights because they are worried about losing their jobs or being moved to another department.

Pollution and large amounts of waste

Fashion's environmental impact is considerable, given that consumption has increased by 400% in recent years and manufacturing has changed dramatically, leaving a huge carbon footprint. The cycle shown in Figure 1 gives an idea of the amount of resources used and the emissions, pollutants and waste generated. If we focus on the production chain, we find different types of pollution and/or waste in the stages of a collection's production:



Waste. There are two main types of waste, namely, the wastewater that pollutes river systems, land, etc., and solid waste, such as industrial waste, samples, garments that are rejected and clothes that end up in landfills after being used.

Pollutants. Dyeing and weaving processes produce large amounts of pollutants, many of them highly toxic, such as nonylphenol ethoxylates (NPEs), amines and phthalates. Pesticides and fertilisers are used in the production of cotton, which is the most widely used fibre in fashion.



GHG emissions. Most stages emit greenhouse gases, including shopping trips and acquisition trips to Asia, the sending of samples and manufacturing itself. Emissions are also produced at the design and distribution facilities and factories.

Exploitation of natural resources. A great quantity of resources, especially water, is used, as large amounts of water are needed to manufacture fabrics; land is also needed to produce cotton, linen, etc.; petroleum to produce polyester, nylon, etc.; and fuel for ships, aircraft, goods vehicles, etc.



The fast fashion industry is one of the most polluting industries. It would be impossible to list all the pollutants and waste it generates, because the industry comprises a variety of agents and because making just one garment involves dozens of stages. One of the most polluting stages is the cultivation of cotton, which is the most widely used fibre in the sector. Intensive cotton cultivation accounts for 2.6% of global water use and requires large amounts of pesticides and fertilisers, which pollute groundwater, air and soil. Nylon and polyester, which are also widely used, are made from petrochemicals. Therefore, they are not biodegradable and accumulate in rivers and oceans, leading to bioaccumulation in different species. During production, a great deal of energy is used and nitrogen oxides are emitted.

Then there is the transport sector: according to a study published in the journal *Environmental Science and Technology*, between 18% and 30% of global emissions of nitrogen oxides and 9% of sulphur oxides are produced by commercial ships. It also warns that just 15 cargo ships emit the same amount of pollutants as 760 million cars.

New initiatives and the future of fast fashion

Not only does fast fashion cause significant waste, pollution and emissions, it is also associated with gender discrimination, violation of workers' rights and inhumane working conditions in many countries. A devastating example was the collapse of the Rana Plaza building in Bangladesh, which killed over a thousand people and exposed appalling working conditions and social injustice: whilst in the West we buy T-shirts for three euros, on the other side of the world people work endless hours to make our clothes for a monthly salary of about 50 euros.

Some multinationals have taken the initiative and are beginning to make garments with organic cotton and producing so-called "conscious collections", others collect garments that are being thrown away and donate them to NGOs, and corporate social responsibility departments are starting to proliferate. These would be interesting developments if they represented more than just a tiny part of the sweeping changes that are really needed, starting with design and distribution centres in Europe and their role in improving conditions in Asian factories.

Fast fashion is the quintessence of consumer capitalism, and the change to another model of production in the sector should involve both companies and institutions and consumers. The latter as a group must seek to align their way of thinking with their buying habits, and demand that companies produce local, sustainable and socially just products. ●

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Almagro Lace

A centuries-old handcraft

by MARÍA GREIL

Almagro has historical links to the Order of Calatrava – first in the thirteenth century and later through the Fugger family of German bankers – that have been fundamental to the history of the city. The grandson of the Catholic Monarchs, Charles V, took on enormous debts with the Fugger bank in order to buy the electoral votes to become Emperor of Germany. Some of these debts were repaid with the income of the Order of Calatrava, which controlled properties including the mercury mines of Almadén, which were key to extracting silver and gold from the ores shipped to Spain from the New World. The *Fúcares* – the Spanish adaptation of the surname Fugger – set up their offices in Almagro and administered the Order's revenue for over a century. It was precisely during this period, spanning the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, that Almagro began to prosper as an economic and cultural force and the city took on more attractive appearance.



Figure A. Blonde lace from Almagro. Fine silk ground, solid motifs and veins in thicker silk thread.



1 Part II, published 1615, chapter LII, letter from Sancha to her husband Sancho in which she writes: “Sanchica makes bone-lace, and gets eight maravedis a day, which she drops into a till-box, to help her toward household stuff; but now that she is a governor’s daughter, she has no need to work, for thou wilt give her a portion without it”.

2 “... said don Quixote ... How can it be that a girl who can hardly manage twelve lace bobbins can open her mouth to disapprove of the histories of knights-errant?...”. Part II of *The Ingenious Gentleman Don Quixote of La Mancha*, chapter VI.

3 This can be concluded from the texts of Hermann Kellenbenz on Fugger Bank in Spain and Portugal. He writes that the industrialists Johann von Schüren and Johann Schedler married women from Almagro, which would indicate that they arrived in Spain unmarried. See *Los Fugger en España y*

The years that followed saw the city fall into a slow decline, but Almagro has remained famous for its bobbin lace, and there is evidence to suggest that the craft can be dated back some distance in history. As we learn from Miguel de Cervantes in *The Ingenious Gentleman Don Quixote de La Mancha*, lace was already being made for sale in the early part of the seventeenth century¹, so an industry already existed in La Mancha. We do not know what type or what quality of lace was produced, although the number of bobbins that were used² and the relatively plain appearance suggest that it cannot have been of particular complexity. Perhaps local linen was used in its creation, since the fine threads must have been imported from abroad.

How did bobbin lace find its way to Almagro? There are a number of theories, but none that are fully supported by historical record. According to one, it may have arrived at the turn of the sixteenth century when Juana la Loca passed through Almagro from Flanders; another suggests that the Fugger family may have brought knowledge of it with them some years later. The latter theory is highly questionable, since the company is thought to have sent its delegates abroad without their wives and families³, and it is the women who would have demonstrated this handcraft to the local population.

Portugal hasta 1560, Junta de Castilla y León. Consejería de Educación y Cultura. Salamanca, 2000, p. 653.

There are also references to affairs between the family’s representatives and Spanish women, as well as illegitimate

children. See the news story dated 23 November 2013 on a talk by Arcadio Calvo, the official chronicler of Almagro, about Isabel Fugger, the illegitimate daughter of Jorge Fúcar Ilung with Isabel Pinedo <http://goo.gl/6zPe2B>.

Almagro Museum.



4 Colección Alcabala del Viento, no. 61, *Almagro 1751*, Centro de Gestión Catastral y Cooperación Tributaria, Ediciones Tabapress (Grupo Tabacalera), Madrid, 1994, pp. 89-93.

5 Presumably a reference to linen.

6 GRUPO AL-BALATITHA: *Los pueblos de la Provincia de Ciudad Real a través de las descripciones del Cardenal Lorenzana*. Caja de Ahorro de Toledo. Obra Cultural. Toledo, 1985, p. 59.

We can infer that lace was present in the city, but documentary sources that might confirm this disappear from the history of Almagro until the time of Charles III of Spain, under whose reign the Ensenada census of 1751 recorded 20 lace dealers and sellers of lace⁴. Several years later, in 1782, Cardinal Lorenzana gathered new information on Almagro, in which it was recorded that: *la fabrica y manufacturas estavlecidas en esta villa es la de encaje de hilo⁵ fino y basto, blondas y rehedezillas, que por los mismos vecinos de esta villa se ban a vender a todas las partes del reino* [the factory and manufacturing established in this town are of fine and course thread, blonde lace and nets, which by the people of this town are sold to all parts of the kingdom]⁶. This again provides evidence of a large number of people involved in the production of bobbin lace. Nothing is said about who these people were or what conditions they worked in, but we can infer that lace was made by women working in homes across Almagro and neighbouring towns, whose knowledge was passed directly from mother to daughter without the need for formal learning. What is clear is that these women created a sizeable artisan industry from which a great many male intermediaries grew wealthy.



Typical example of blonde lace displayed at the Almagro Museum.

7 Doctoral thesis of Victoria López Barahona: *Las trabajadoras madrileñas del siglo XVIII. Familias, talleres y mercados*. Departamento de Historia Moderna. UAM, Madrid, 2015, p. 276 et. seq. For more information on the subject, see also José A. Nieto Sánchez: *Las artesanas madrileñas en el Antiguo Régimen*, Taller de Historia Social, <http://goo.gl/ofLJpf> and Victoria López Barahona: *Las trabajadoras madrileñas en la Edad Moderna*, Taller de Historia Social, <http://goo.gl/6HTEJ6>.

8 GARCIA RUIPEREZ, Mariano: *La industria textil en Castilla-La Mancha durante el siglo XVIII*. At the 1er Congreso de Historia de Castilla-La Mancha, Vol. 8, 1988, p. 374.

9 AHN. Consejos. Legajo 1525. Expediente 4. We draw on the fascinating study by Carmen Sarasúa, which contains an image of the piece referred to here, *La industria del encaje en el Campo de Calatrava. Siglo XVIII-XIX* (1995). The study can be read

In the eighteenth century, during the Enlightenment, the court of Madrid saw the creation of several bobbin lace school-workshops⁷ for impoverished women, supported by state funds. As in the rest of Europe, lace did not fall within the framework of a particular guild, belonging perhaps to the sector of *passementerie*. Laws excluded women from the guild structure, such that their work was not considered a qualified occupation and was poorly remunerated. Women who sold their produce did so for a pittance and with no official recognition, obliged by the necessities of the period⁸. Indeed, the work was in some cases more than a means of supplementing the household income, often constituting the family's only salary. Speed was vital to these lace-makers, who needed to produce as much as possible in the time available to them, yet quality was also important as competition was fierce. In Almagro, the situation was much the same.

The story of María Correas, then, should come as no surprise. Almagro-born, unmarried and resident in Madrid, in 1793 she sought permission to open a “school of lace and blonde lace”. To demonstrate her skills and acquire the teaching accreditation needed to open the school, she took an examination that required her to design and produce a sample of blonde lace. Her exquisite work won the approval of the examiners, and on 29 January 1794 she was officially awarded the title of *maestra*⁹. The work produced by María Correas is surprising for the fine thread used in the ground and the solid part of the motifs, presumably silk¹⁰. However, in the present we would not class this

online at the author's website: <http://goo.gl/4UBkM9>.

10 On the subject of silk in the Iberian Peninsula, see:

Comisión Española de la Ruta de la Seda: *España y Portugal en las rutas de la seda. Diez siglos de producción*

y comercio entre Oriente y Occidente, Universitat de Barcelona, Barcelona, 1996.



Lace-makers in the 1950s.

11 LARRUGA, Emilio: *Memorias Económicas y Políticas*, Vol. XVII, Madrid 1787.

12 MADOZ, Pascual: *Diccionario Geográfico, Estadístico, Histórico de España y sus Posesiones de Ultramar*, Vol. II, p. 65, voz “Almagro”, Madrid, 1847.

13 Doctoral thesis of Victoria López Barahona: *Las trabajadoras...*, p. 344. Although the author gives a different name for María Correas (María Carreras), on the strength of the details she provides I believe them to be the same person.

14 BARBA, Cándido: *El encaje de bolillos. Estudio etnográfico*. Diputación de Ciudad Real-Área de Cultura. Biblioteca de Autores y Temas Manchegos. Ciudad Real, 1986, p. 23.

15 Letter dated 1 May 1896 in Buenos Aires. The trading company *La Portuguesa*, which specialised in importing lace, is contacting Manuel Miñones, of Ponte do Porto, a seller of Galician lace. The text can be read in the *Reseñas Históricas* section of the website <http://goo.gl/zSaZ7Z>.

examination piece as “blonde lace”, describing it rather as a “plain lace of continuous threads with a tulle ground and vein, without additional pairs”, since neither the design nor the technical characteristics coincide with current notions of this style, accented by the contrast between an extremely light tulle ground made with fine twisted silk thread and solid patterning in thicker silk, with pairs of bobbins added or removed at the maker’s discretion. Once again, we return to the uncertainty of exactly how to define the lace produced in Almagro.

The reformist airs of the Enlightenment and its school-workshops did not find their way to Almagro, but progress came through other means. According to Larruga¹¹ and Madoz¹², Manuel Martínez and his wife Rita Lambert arrived from Madrid in 1776 to open in Almagro “a factory to make plain and silk lace, teaching the technique to women and children from the surrounding towns”. Perhaps María Correas¹³ was among these local employees and acquired from Rita Lambert the knowledge of fine lace that she demonstrated in her examination.

In 1796, the brothers Juan Bautista and Félix Torres, from Mataró, opened “blonde lace factories in Almagro and the neighbouring towns”. This answers the question as to the origins of Almagro’s blonde lace (Fig. A), which would presumably have been a modification of the Catalan technique. The quality of workmanship must have been excellent, and we learn that in 1841, “lace and blonde lace from Almagro won the gold medal at a national exhibition in which they competed with Catalan blonde lace, which was awarded silver”¹⁴. Almagro lace won renown beyond the borders of Spain and by 1886 it was being exported to Spanish America¹⁵.

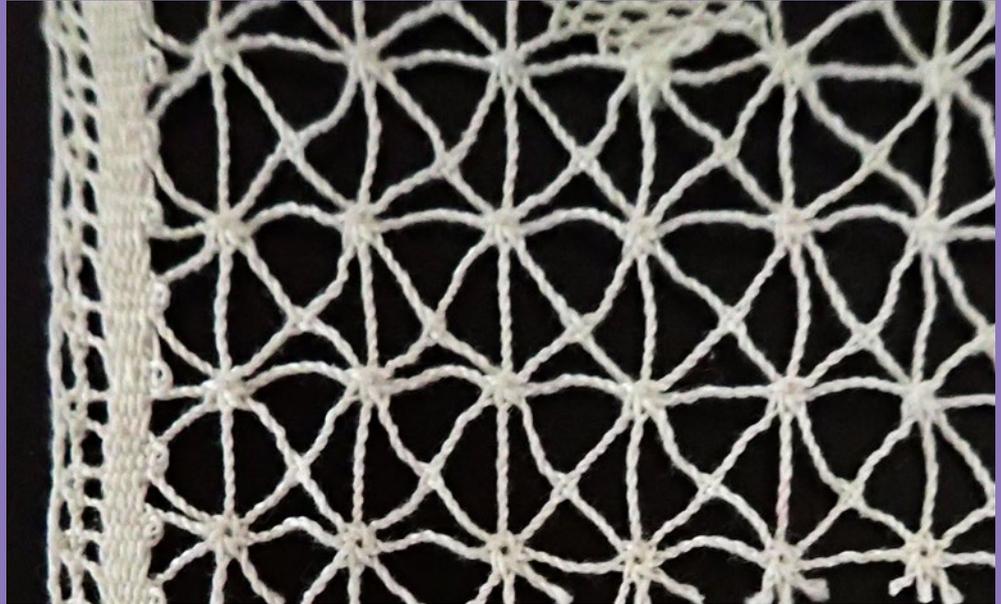


Figure B. Needle lace.
Almagro.

16 La Exposición Vaticana Ilustrada, versión de ‘La Esposizione Vaticana’ órgano oficial de la Comisión Promovedora, no. 47, Barcelona, 6 January 1889, p. 375.

17 BARBA, C.: *El encaje...*, p. 24.

18 Obituary in *Cronista Almagreño*, no. 116, February 2012, p. 34.

19 SANCHEZ-HERMOSILLA, Fr. Francisco: *Fr. Pedro Gerard y el Sindicato de Encajeras de Almagro* in *El Cronista Almagreño*, nº 29, marzo 2004, pp. 18-19.

20 MARTINEZ CERRO, Manuel: *Encajeras Peninsulares Reunidas*, in *El Cronista Almagreño*, no. 81, December 2008, p. 39-40.

21 For example, *punto de antena* is produced in both Almagro and Camariñas, but the pairs are crossed differently. For the Galician version, see CANOURA, Concepción: *Raizame do encaixe galego*, p. 5; for the version produced in Almagro, see Fig. B.

22 The Danish case is illustrative: PETERSEN, Jette: *Tonderkniplinger og deres navne*, Tonder Museum, Tonder, Denmark, 2000.

Other sources attest to the quality of more ornate varieties of Almagro lace. The jury responsible for classifying the objects presented to mark the Sacerdotal Jubilee of Pope Leon XIII in 1888 awarded a gold medal for the “collection created in Almagro, Ciudad Real, for an alb with gold and silver lace”^{16,17}.

Through the research of the Almagro local Francisco Sánchez-Hermosilla¹⁸ – sadly no longer with us – we learn that a Dominican Friar, Pedro Gerard, was known for his work with the most disadvantaged social groups in the region in the early years of the twentieth century, and that these groups included the lace-makers of Almagro. It was perhaps Friar Gerard, then, who drove the creation of the Christian Union of Women Lace-Makers of Almagro. Only a few details are conserved about the organisation, recorded in a single folder “containing documents about a lace-makers’ union”, thanks to which we know that the union existed and was active until at least the early 1920s¹⁹. Among these documents are the General Regulations for the Mutuality of the Union of Women Lace-Makers of Almagro, signed by the Board of Directors and dated 27 February 1914. After Friar Gerard’s death, however, the uncertainties of Spanish society of the time put an end to this initiative to safeguard the rights of Almagro’s lace-makers.

In 1926 a number of lace-making workshops across Spain, including those in Almagro, formed an association to create the company *Encajeras Peninsulares Reunidas S.A.*, intended to be a major project that united producers across the profession. The aim was to establish a rational model for exporting Spanish lace, and a year later the Spanish American market took 90% of the total national production. However, its preference eventually turned to lace produced in Belgium due to the favourable currency exchange, and the Spanish project was halted by serious financial difficulties²⁰.

Almagro lace, now made with cotton thread, has qualities all of its own, but it also shares a number of characteristics with the Galician lace made in Camariñas²¹. As in other areas with a lace tradition, different forms are given distinct names²² that make them easy to identify and are immediately



Figure C. “Popular” or “torchon” lace, not originating from Almagro.

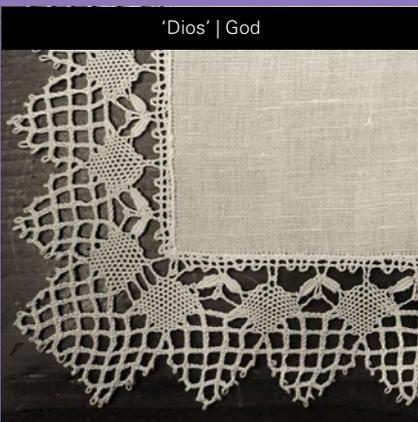
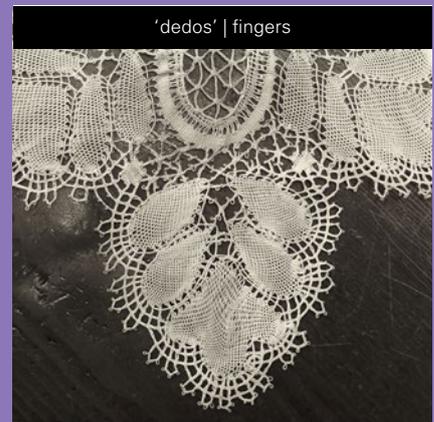
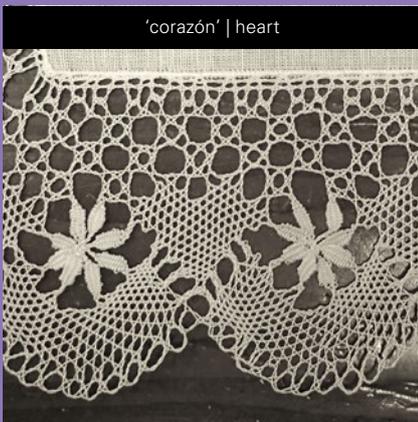
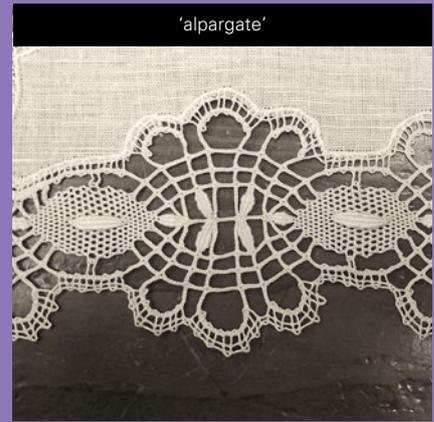
²³ Information provided by Julia at *Artes El Villar*, Plaza Mayor 43, Almagro, Phone number 34 926 860 622, <http://goo.gl/ZyZU7t>.

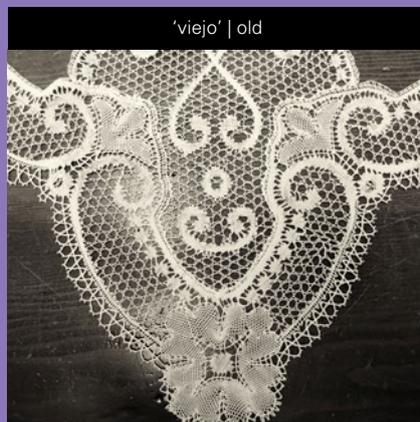
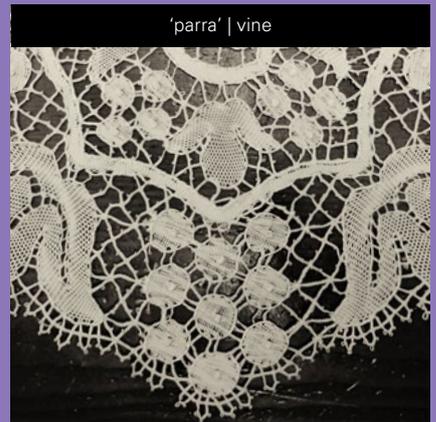
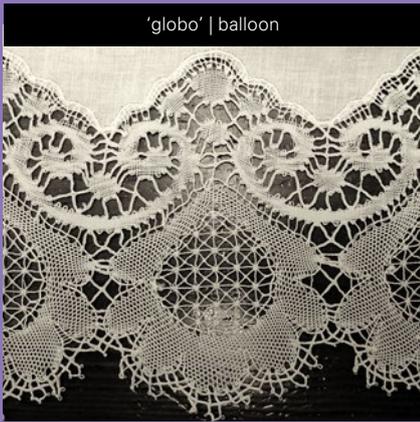
recognised by lace-makers²³, for example “la flor cubana” [Cuban flower], “avellanas” [hazelnuts], “las guindas” [cherries] and “las plumas” [feathers]. The influence of blonde lace is immediately apparent, both in the design and the technique; the original lace from Almagro was made in the guipure style, with numerous pleats and lanceolate leaves. This may have been typical of the very earliest Spanish lace, which would have found its way to Almagro. Nowadays it is also common to find “popular” or “torchon” lace (Fig. C), which is lighter in appearance.

As tastes evolved and our way of life changed over the course of the twentieth century, lace became outmoded and unwanted and interest in its production largely fell away. In Almagro, however, lace-making continued and the city strove to recover the identity of its textile past. Interest in traditional arts and crafts was rekindled, and in the 1970s Almagro’s impressive cultural heritage saw it named a national heritage site. Lace-making is now considered a legacy of the city’s past and receives official support from municipal authorities, although this extends only to teaching, which is offered at the Universidad Popular and the Museo del Encaje y la Blonda (printed guides and research publications are notable for their scarcity). Lace is sold across the city and has become a major tourist attraction, together with the famed local aubergines, the Classical Theatre Festival and the Plaza Mayor.

Demand from a new generation of uninformed and largely undemanding customers has led to a focus on quantity over quality. Times have certainly changed, as has Almagro with them, but we might ask whether the same applies to those anonymous lace-makers who continue to pursue their craft.

Different forms of lace used by the lace-makers of Almagro.





Conclusion

Almagro and the surrounding area are renowned for the production of bobbin lace. It is not known precisely when or how the craft emerged, but evidence stretches back over several centuries, carried out by women in the domestic environment. Though production has fluctuated over the years, lace is still made in the area to this day and the industry is carefully conserved as a mark of identity of the city and a valuable tourist attraction. ●

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A short biographical note on Henriette Nigrin, creator of Delphos

by SILVIA BAÑARES

Abstract

Henriette Nigrin has been widely described as the companion and muse of Mariano Fortuny. However she was also a relevant inventor and textile designer in her own right.

The aim of this article is to provide biographical information about Henriette Nigrin and describe some of the events in her life that cast her in a new light.

1 Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Mariutti Fortuny Collection, Register M 1.10.32. See also FRANZINI, C. “Henriette e Mariano, le impronte degli iconauti” in *Henriette Fortuny, Ritratto di una musa*. Museo Fortuny Venecia Palazzo Orfei, page 91.

2 Patent, Office National de la Propriété Industrielle, no. 414.119, undulating pleating system, Paris 10/6/1909. Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Fondo Mariutti Fortuny, Register M 8.1.5. This document, which is carefully conserved by the Biblioteca Marciana de Venecia, was exhibited along with the document cited in note 1 in a wonderful exhibition held between December 2015 and March 2016 in the Fortuny Museum, Venice.

However, it is still not known why this patent could not be registered in the name

Henriette Nigrin has been widely described as the muse and collaborator of the great artist Mariano Fortuny y Madrazo.

However, in recent years, new information has emerged that reveals her role was not limited to that of the companion of a twentieth-century icon: she was also an important inventor and creator in the textile field.

This was confirmed by Henriette herself in a hand-written letter to Elsie McNeill after the death of Fortuny, in which she stated that: “... *Per quanto concerne al Delphos, dopo maturo esame, e ciò mi ha fatto ritardare a risponderti, sono venuta nella determinazione irrevocabile di cessare la produzione a carattere commerciale. Considerato poi che tali vesti, ancor più di tante altre, sono de la mia propria creazione, desidero che non siano riprese da altri, e pertanto al commercio della Delphos si deve porre la parola ‘fine’*”¹.

Beyond Henriette’s own words, Mariano Fortuny also acknowledged her work when he claimed the following in a copy of a patent application for his undulating pleating system: “*ce brevet est de la propriété de Madame Henriette Brassart qui est l’inventeur. J’ai pris ce brevet en mon nom pour l’urgence du dépôt... Le 10 Juin 1909 à Paris. Fortuny*”².

of Henriette, or why she was called “Henriette Brassart” why she was called “Henriette Brassart” by

Fortuny, that is, using her mother’s name.

See also FRANZINI, C. “Henriette e Mariano, le

impronte degli iconauti” in *Henriette Fortuny, Ritratto di una musa*. Fortuny Museum, Venice, Palazzo Orfei, page 89.

Delphos gown, silk. Workshop
of Mariano Fortuny, Venice.
CDMT 15200. [See more.](#)





3 FERRETI, D. “Ritratto di una musa” in *Henriette Fortuny, Ritratto di una musa*. Fortuny Museum, Venice, Palazzo Orfei, page 14.

4 Register of Births, Fontainebleau, 1877.

5 It appears that Henriette’s grandfather or perhaps her great-grandfather (the two men had the same name) opted for French nationality after certain territories of Alsace-Lorraine were annexed by Germany.

6 Paris 23/11/1848 - Fontainebleau 2/11/1901, according to the Register of Deaths, Fontainebleau, 1901.

Mariano Fortuny also mentioned this in his biography, in which he stated that: “*ma Femme et moi, nous avons fondé, au Palazzo Orfei un atelier d’impression suivant une méthode entièrement nouvelle... Cette industrie a commencée par des châles en soie et s’est développée avec des robes*”³.

Nevertheless, the personal life of this artist, who was French by nationality, Spanish by marriage and perhaps Venetian at heart, continues to be a great mystery.

Research into the potential causes of her late marriage led us to extensive information held in public and private archives, mainly French, and it was through this information that we were able to reconstruct a biography of Henriette Nigrin.

Henriette Nigrin was born in Fontainebleau on 4 October 1877. Her parents, Frédéric Albert Nigrin and Marie Juliette Brassart, chose the name Adèle Henriette Elisabeth, as recorded on her birth certificate⁴. Although Adèle was her first name, she always used Henriette.

Her father’s family were from Alsace⁵, although Frédéric Nigrin had been born in Paris (in the old eighth arrondissement) in 1848 and died in Fontainebleau in 1901⁶. When his daughter was born he was 28 years old.

7 Soultz sous Foret (Bais Rhin) 12/2/1817 - Fontainebleau 11/10/1899, according to the Register of Deaths, Fontainebleau, 1899.

8 As stated in his son's marriage certificate, cited in note 22.

9 *Annuaire général du commerce, de l'industrie, de la magistrature et de l'administration: ou almanach des 500.000 adresses de Paris, des départements et des pays étrangers*, 1845.

10 Paris 26/8/1925 - Fontainebleau 6/3/1895, according to the Register of Deaths, Fontainebleau, 1895.

11 Specifically, on 23/2/1847, according to the *Fichiers alphabétiques de l'état civil reconstitué* (sixteenth century - 1859), Paris. The marriage certificate could not be obtained, as archives previous to 1860 were destroyed in a fire at Paris City Council in May 1871 and have only been partially reconstructed.

12 List of Names, Fontainebleau, 1881.

13 According to the entries in the Register of Deaths for Frédéric Nigrin and Elisabeth Julie Albrecht, referred to in notes 6 and 10.

14 Register of Births, Valenciennes, 1850. The place and date of Juliette Brassart's death are unknown, although she was alive in 1924 (according to the marriage certificate of Henriette Nigrin and Mariano Fortuny).

15 Valenciennes 19/05/1806 - Valenciennes 5/5/1875, according to the Register of Deaths, Valenciennes 1875.

Henriette's father was the son of Joseph Frédéric Nigrin⁷ (a "rentier"⁸ by profession in the last years of his life, and prior to that a "tourneur en bois"⁹) and Elisabeth Julie Albrecht¹⁰, who married in Paris in 1847¹¹. They moved with their son to the city of Fontainebleau, where in 1881 they were registered as residents of Rue des Pins 13¹², an address that they kept until the time of their death¹³.

It can be assumed that Henriette saw her paternal grandparents frequently, as they lived close to one another in the same city.

Henriette's mother, Marie Juliette Brassart, for whom no profession is recorded, was born in Valenciennes on 12 August 1850¹⁴ and was 27 years old when she had her daughter.

Marie Juliette Brassart was the daughter of Nicolas Théodore Brassart¹⁵ (a "sellier" by profession¹⁶) and Albertine Eleanore Clerfayt¹⁷ (a "lingère"¹⁸ in the year of her marriage and "propriétaire"¹⁹ in the 1870s). Both of her parents were from the city of Valenciennes and married there in 1841, after obtaining the necessary dispensation, as they were brother- and sister-in-law²⁰. They remained in the city, living at Rue des Lilles 50²¹.

Henriette's parents married in Paris on 21 October 1876. The choice of city may be due to the fact that Marie Juliette Brassart lived in Paris with her brother (Henriette's uncle), at Rue Louis le Grand 18²².

However, the married couple soon moved to Fontainebleau, where Frédéric Nigrin lived²³. In 1877, the family resided at Boulevard Magenta 19, where Henriette was born²⁴, and where they remained until 1881²⁵, although some time between 1882 and 1886 they moved to Rue Grande 112 in Fontainebleau²⁶, which would be their home until 1901.

16 According to his marriage certificate, cited in note 20.

17 Valenciennes 22/05/1812, according to the Register of Births, Valenciennes, 1812. The maternal grandmother's place and date of death is unknown.

18 According to the marriage certificate cited in note 20.

19 According to her daughter's birth certificate, cited in note 22.

20 Specifically, on 21 January 1841, as stated in the Register of Marriages, Valenciennes, 1841.

21 According to the marriage certificate of Henriette Nigrin's parents, cited in note 22.

22 Register of Marriages, Paris (second arrondissement), 1876.

23 According to the marriage certificate of Henriette Nigrin's parents cited in note 22, her father already lived in this city.

24 According to Henriette's birth certificate, cited in note 4.

This is also stated in FERRETTI D. "Ritratto di una musa" in *Henriette Fortuny*,

Ritratto di una musa. Fortuny Museum, Venice, Palazzo Orfei, page 11.

25 See also lists of names of the population of Fontainebleau, 1881.

26 According to the certificate of Henriette's first marriage, cited in note 35. See also lists of names of the population of Fontainebleau from 1896 and from 1901.

Sleeveless gown, printed silk. Once owned by Marcel Proust and Reynaldo Hahn.
Workshop of Mariano Fortuny, Venice, 1910-1919. CDMT 19561. [See detail.](#)



27 Marriage certificate, cited in note 22.

28 As stated in the death certificates of Frédéric Nigrin and Elisabeth Julie Albrecht, cited in notes 6 and 10.

29 According to Henriette's birth certificate, cited in note 4.

See also FERRETTI D. "Ritratto di una musa" in *Henriette Fortuny, Ritratto di una musa*. Museo Fortuny Venecia Palazzo Orfei, page 11.

30 See note 32.

31 Her extraordinary abilities as a seamstress have been highlighted by DE OSMA, G.: "Mariano Fortuny, arte, ciencia y diseño" Ed. Ollero y Ramos, page 153.

32 Register of Births of Fontainebleau, 1879.

33 According to the lists of names of the population, Fontainebleau, 1891.

34 In the lists of names of the population of Fontainebleau for 1881 and 1886, various employees are always registered at the address.

35 Register of Marriages, Fontainebleau, 1897.

36 Register of Births, Marriages and Deaths, Fromonville (Arrondissement de Fontainebleau), 1866. Jean Bellorgeot's parents stated on his birth certificate that their profession was "domestiques" and that they lived in Rue l'Odéon 13, Paris (which was probably their place of work). However, Jean Bellorgeot's mother moved to the paternal home (in Fromonville) to give birth.

37 See the marriage certificate cited in note 35.



In most public documents, Henriette's father gave the profession of "restaurateur". This is the profession he declared at important moments in his life, such as his marriage to Marie Juliette²⁷ and the deaths of his parents²⁸.

However, it is also known that he worked for a period as "gérant de mess" for the *Ecole d'application de l'artillerie et du génie* in Fontainebleau. This is the profession he stated in some official documents, for example, when Henriette²⁹ and her sister³⁰ were born, and is also recorded in the Fontainebleau census of 1881.

Henriette's mother is always documented as "sans profession". However, from her mother's side (her family was from Valenciennes and some relatives, including her grandmother, had worked with lingerie), Henriette may have inherited a feel for fabrics and laces³¹. Likewise, from her father's side she may have acquired some knowledge of wood carving, given that her paternal grandfather was a "tourneur en bois".

In the documents that were consulted, there is very little information about Henriette's earliest years and her childhood. We know only that she had one sister (Marie Leonie Elisabeth Nigrin³²), who was born two years after Henriette in 1879, and that Henriette lived with her parents in the family home (first in Rue Magenta and then in Rue Grande) in Fontainebleau until she was 19 years old. However, Henriette must also have spent some time living with her paternal grandparents, as she is listed at their address on Rue des Pins in the 1891 census³³.

Given Henriette's father's trade and the number of household staff they employed³⁴, it would seem that the family was comfortably off, though not extravagantly wealthy.

Henriette again appears in public records on the occasion of her first marriage: she married Jean Eusèbe León Bellorgeot on 12 January 1897, when she was very young. The ceremony took place at the Registry Office of Fontainebleau³⁵.

Jean Bellorgeot was born on 31 August 1870 (in Fromonville, Seine-et-Marne)³⁶, making him seven years older than Henriette. At the time of their marriage, Jean Bellorgeot declared that he lived in Marlotte³⁷ (Commune de Bourron).

The witnesses were Louis Bellorgeot and Armand Ressay (the groom's cousin and brother-in-law, respectively) and Henri Albrecht and Adolphe Nigrin (Henriette's great-uncle and uncle, respectively).

38 “Contrat de mariage” between Henriette Nigrin and Jean Eusèbe Léon Bellorgeot, 12/1/1897, Fontainebleau.

39 Around 2000 francs of the time for Jean Bellorgeot and 1800 francs for Henriette.

40 According to the certificate contained in the Register of Marriages, Fontainebleau, 1899.

41 According to the certificate contained in the Register of Births, Deaths and Marriages, Bourron (Arrondissement de Fontainebleau), 1900.

42 We did not find women registered as witnesses of civil registrations and events in any of the documents that we consulted. However, it is reasonable to consider that Jean Bellorgeot witnessed these events because it was a role that was traditionally fulfilled by men, so Henriette Nigrin would have delegated this task to her husband.

43 List of names of the population, Commune de Bourron-Marlotte, 1901.

44 List of names of the population, Bourron and Marlotte, 1901. The populations were annexed in 1919, after which their names were changed to Bourron-Marlotte.

<https://goo.gl/SyTMDh>

45 List of names of the population, Commune de Bourron, 1901. The record shows that in 1901, Marie Nigrin, her husband Léon Nicault, her daughter Lucette Nicault and a “domestique” who was 15 years old (Georgette Arrault) were registered as living in the same house.

Surprisingly, they signed a marriage contract (“contrat de mariage”)³⁸, a document usually signed in specific circumstances or when there is a certain imbalance of assets between the future spouses.

However, the decision to do so does not appear to have come from Henriette’s family, as neither her parents nor her sister (who married only two years later) signed contracts of this type.

The contract signed with Henriette (in her family home, hours before the civil wedding took place, in the presence of a notary from Fontainebleau), seems to reveal a certain degree of concern about Bellorgeot’s business activity.

In fact, beyond the usual stipulations of such contracts (including dowries³⁹ and the establishment of joint ownership of assets), the document poignantly states that no debts derived from the business managed at the time by her future husband could be levied against Henriette or her dowry.

The couple appears in public records again on the occasion of Henriette’s sister’s (Marie Nigrin) wedding to Léon Nicault, on 6 June 1899⁴⁰, and when Henriette’s niece was born (Lucette Nicault) on 27 April 1900⁴¹. Jean Bellorgeot was a witness on both occasions and it is reasonable to assume that he acted in representation of his wife.

In these civil registrations⁴², Jean Bellorgeot stated that his profession⁴² was “entrepreneur de peintures”, although in some population lists he is registered simply as “peintre”⁴³.

The couple are again identified together in 1901, in the population census of Marlotte⁴⁴, a town just a few kilometres south of Fontainebleau.

Marlotte was home to Henriette’s only sister (Marie Nigrin)⁴⁵. The proximity of the sisters’ houses (Grande Rue and Rue Montigny) suggests that they are likely to have seen one another often. During this period, Henriette’s niece was born (Lucette Nicault).

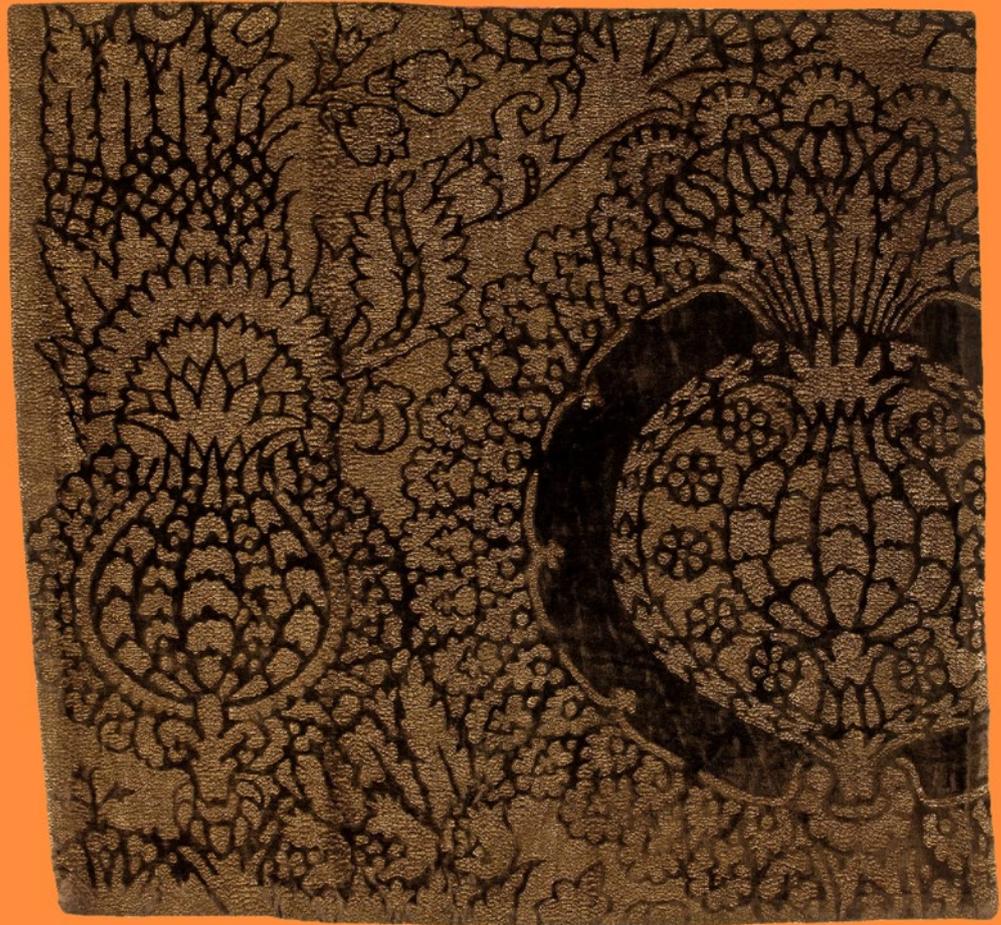
Henriette’s brother-in-law (Léon Nicault) was born in Piffonds (Yonne)⁴⁶ on 11 April 1872 and his profession was “charcutier”⁴⁷.

The towns of Bourron, Marlotte and Montigny were known from the nineteenth century as places where artists went to seek inspiration and to commune with nature. Although they were small towns, their idyllic location south of the Forest of Fontainebleau and close to the River Loing offered an

46 According to the Register of Births, Piffonds (Yonne), 1872.

47 According to the marriage certificate cited in note 40.

Fragment of printed velvet.
Workshop of Mariano Fortuny,
1910-1925. CDMT 20477.



48 In DE OSMA, G.: “Mariano Fortuny, arte, ciencia y diseño” Ed. Ollero y Ramos, page 56 and SMITH, W.L. A “Reviving Fortuny’s phantasmagorias” PhD thesis, University of Manchester, 2015, page 34.

49 List of names of the population, Commune de Bourron, 1901, cited in note 44.

50 As stated by Henriette on her marriage to Mariano Fortuny.

51 Court case 8475 de 1902.

52 Register of births, marriages and deaths of Bourron (arrondissement de Fontainebleau), 1903.

53 Archives Commerciales de la France, 14/10/1903.

54 According to the certificate for a marriage held on 5/11/1904 in Nandon.

attractive setting, and saw them become the spiritual home of nineteenth-century landscape painting and French Impressionism.

It has been stated that Henriette was an artist’s model in Paris⁴⁸. Perhaps it was her husband of the time (Jean Bellorgeot) who introduced her to the art world, with which he had contact through his profession.

However, it is also possible that in a town as small as Marlotte (which had a population of some 600 people⁴⁹), Henriette’s beauty and youth made her particularly noticeable, attracting artists who had travelled to the area in search of inspiration.

Henriette’s first marriage, which was childless⁵⁰, was terminated on 31 July 1902, after receiving a decree of divorce from the Civil Court of La Seine⁵¹. Given that Henriette and Jean Bellorgeot were registered together at their home in Bourron in 1901, we can deduce that the proceedings were completed rapidly, with no particular complications.

After this date, Jean Bellorgeot seems to have disassociated himself from the Nigrin family. When Marie Nigrin’s second child, Marcel Léon Nicault, was born in 1903⁵², he did not appear as a witness.

In the same year, Jean Bellorgeot appears as manager of a “peintures et vitrerie” business in new premises in Sèvres, close to Paris⁵³.

Soon afterwards, in November 1904, Jean remarried⁵⁴, and he died in Mureaux in 1959.

55 We are grateful to Guillermo de Osma for his thoughts and help on this point.

56 In 1901, Henriette was still registered as living in Marlotte.

57 In DE OSMA, G.: “Mariano Fortuny, arte, ciencia y diseño” Ed. Ollero y Ramos, page 68.

58 L'intransigeant, Journal de Paris, 28/2/1909.

59 As an example, the magazine “La Renaissance de l'art français et des industries de luxe” published in January 1924 stated that “la maison Mariano Fortuny est un pont vénitien, coloré et chamarré entre Venise et Paris”.

60 Le Figaro, 20/12/1932 “Mariano Fortuny, 67 Rue Pierre Charron. Cadeaux de Noël: Jolis sacs, plafonniers. Services à thé, chemins de table, tapis de bridge, coussins, etc.... à partir de 50 francs”.

61 Le Figaro 18/4/1932.

62 According to the ten-year lists for the city of Paris corresponding to 1924.

See also NICOLÁS MARTÍNEZ, M^o de M.: “Mariano Fortuny y Madrazo. Entre la modernidad y la tradición”, doctoral thesis, Universidad de Granada, Departamento de Historia del Arte, May 1993.

63 According to a marginal note added in 1902 to the certificate of the marriage between Jean Bellorgeot and Henriette, filed in the Register of Marriages of Fontainebleau, 1897. This fact was published by NICOLÁS

It is not known how Henriette and Mariano met. Mariano may have visited Marlotte between 1897 and 1902, or perhaps Henriette’s husband at that time, as an “entrepreneur de peintures”, took her to an art event in Paris. Another reasonable hypothesis is that they were introduced by a relative or mutual friend⁵⁵.

The exact date of their first meeting is not known, but it must have been at the turn of the century⁵⁶ and definitely before 1902, as Henriette moved to Venice on 14 July of that year⁵⁷, shortly before obtaining the final decree of divorce.

The meeting, whenever it took place, was the beginning of a romantic and working relationship that endured until Mariano Fortuny’s death in Venice on 2 May 1949.

Henriette’s designs were enthusiastically received upon their launch. Nevertheless, the press of the time attributed them without exception to Fortuny⁵⁸. The success was repeated over the years, and the objects displayed in the shop on Rue Charron (“de lignes sobres, larges courbures y nettement moderne”⁵⁹) received praise from specialised magazines. In addition to dresses and lamps, the shop sold fabrics and cushions made in Giudecca, as well as tea services and even table runners⁶⁰.

From the prices fetched by her designs – the pleated dresses were sold in 1932 for at least 500 francs and the shawls from 200 francs of the time⁶¹ – we can confidently state that Henriette’s work contributed greatly to the upkeep of the Palazzo Orfei.

Mariano Fortuny and Henriette Nigrin waited almost 22 years to get married. Their wedding was eventually celebrated in Paris in 1924⁶², in the eighth arrondissement, when they were 52 and 46 years old, respectively.

The reasons for such a long wait are not legal in origin, as Henriette had divorced her first husband in 1902⁶³. Indeed, France had recognised the legal concept of divorce since 1884⁶⁴, and in 1904, articles of French civil law that prevented remarriage within three years of recorded adultery were repealed⁶⁵.

MARTÍNEZ, M^o de M.: “Mariano Fortuny y Madrazo. Entre la modernidad y la tradición”, doctoral thesis, Universidad de Granada, Departamento de Historia del Arte, May 1993; and by DE OSMA, G.: “Mariano Fortuny, arte, ciencia y diseño”, Ed. Ollero y Ramos, page 68.

64 Act of 27 July 1884 (known as the “loi Naquet”). Although French Civil Law of the period only recognised divorce for “faits culpeux” or “divorce pour faute” (that is, for legal reasons and therefore excluding divorce by mutual agreement), couples tended to come up with legal strategies

that in practice converted the divorce into an agreed process.

65 Act of 15 December 1904, repealing Article 298 of the Civil Law that prevented the marriage of an adulterous spouse and his/her accomplice after the declaration of divorce.

66 Act of 18 February 1938 that repealed the “puissance maritale”.

67 According to the marriage contract signed between Mariano Fortuny and Henriette Nigrin on 24/2/1924, cited in note 73.

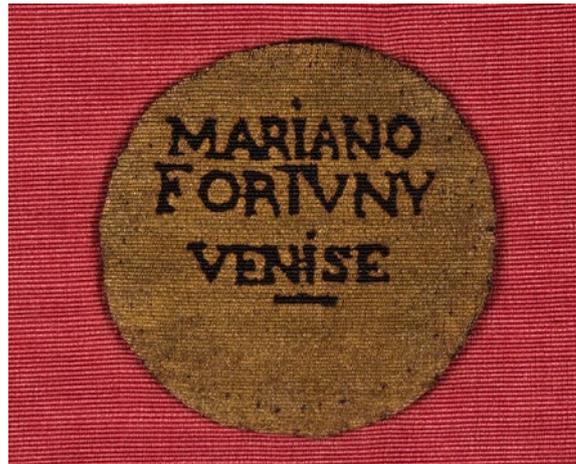
68 See NICOLÁS MARTÍNEZ, M^o de M.: “Mariano Fortuny y Madrazo. Entre la modernidad y la tradición”, doctoral thesis, Universidad de Granada, Departamento de Historia del Arte, May 1993.

69 It seems that the fact that this relation had not been formalised caused considerable tension between Mariano Fortuny and his mother and sister. See DE OSMA, G.: “Mariano Fortuny, arte, ciencia y diseño” Ed. Ollero y Ramos, Page 68.

70 We are grateful for the opinions provided by Guillermo de Osma on this point.

71 See DE OSMA, G. “Mariano Fortuny, arte ciencia y diseño” page 48.

72 See DE OSMA, G. “Mariano Fortuny, arte ciencia y diseño” page 23.



France did not give women the right to administer their assets until 1938⁶⁶. However, this restriction does not seem to have affected Henriette, as it was still in force when she married Mariano Fortuny.

Therefore, it could be stated that from 1902, and particularly from 1904, there was no legal impediment to Henriette’s union with Mariano Fortuny.

If we consider that the monarchical Spain of Alfonso XIII did not recognise divorce and that the situation in Italy was similar, it seems logical that the couple chose France for their nuptials. In 1924, there does not seem to have been any particular event in the life of Mariano Fortuny that required the couple to travel to Paris; a journey that they could have taken advantage of to get married.

Nevertheless, it was at the end of this year, on 13 December, that Mariano Fortuny, who had maintained his Spanish nationality⁶⁷, and after having served as vice-consul, was finally named Spanish consul in Venice. He held the position 12 October 1934⁶⁸.

Perhaps the couple finally gave in to family⁶⁹ and social pressures – in the conservative Spain of 1924 a man was unlikely to become consul if he was involved in an extramarital relationship – and decided to get married with a view to facilitating this appointment. It is also feasible that Mariano Fortuny decided to formalise their relationship in order to give Henriette a certain degree of legal security and to ensure the continuity of the work in Giudecca and in the Palazzo Orfei⁷⁰.

What is clear is that the wedding was an extremely private affair, without any immediate relatives in attendance (neither Mariano’s mother or sister nor Henriette’s mother or sister were invited). The only people present apart from the spouses were the civil servant from Paris City Council and two witnesses: Rafael de Ochoa and Federico de Madrazo. The first was a relative of the Madrazo family⁷¹ and the second (known as “Cocó”) was a cousin of Mariano Fortuny⁷².

It is surprising that Mariano Fortuny stated his profession as “trader”, and that his wife signed the marriage certificate as “Henriette Nigrin”, when for her first marriage she had immediately adopted her husband’s surname (and signed her name as “Henriette Nigrin f. Bellorgeot”).

It is also surprising that both Henriette and Mariano registered their address as Paris (63 de la Avenue des Champs Elysées, a house that was few metres

73 According to the marriage contract signed by Mariano Fortuny and Henriette Nigrin on 24/2/1924 before a notary of Paris.

74 “Communauté de biens réduite aux acquits.”

75 According to the marriage certificate of 1919, in the Register of Marriages, Paris.

76 See note 1.

77 Worth 2 million lira in 1949, according to his testament.

from the shop in Rue Charron and was itself also a shop). Intriguingly, the date they chose for the ceremony was Friday 29 February, perhaps a coincidence, or perhaps a humorous nod to the circumstances that were pushing them into a marriage that neither felt was necessary for them as a couple. The real reasons are not known, and there do not seem to be any documentary sources of contemporaries to shed light on the matter.

Shortly before the wedding, on 25 February, the couple signed a “marriage contract”⁷³ before a notary from Paris, which regulated the disposition of the matrimonial property. The contract, which had to be adapted to Spanish Civil Law as Mariano Fortuny had kept his Spanish nationality, specified joint ownership of assets⁷⁴, although some specific provisions were added a breakdown of each of the couple’s assets at the time of the marriage was given.

Mariano’s contribution was considerable (in total, 423,000 francs of the time) and included, in addition to the business undertaken at Palazzo Orfei and shares in the Giudecca factory (in undivided shares held with Stucky), two shops in Paris (Champs Elysées 63 and Pierre Charron 67) and a shop in London (Bond Street 42). In fact, he brought almost all of his assets he own at that time to the marriage.

Henriette brought to the marriage assets worth 55,000 francs, including the undivided part of a house in Fontainebleau that she had inherited from her father and 15,000 francs in cash. The contribution she made reveals that in the years of cohabitation prior to the marriage, she did not accrue assets in her own name.

Neither Henriette nor Mariano included in the contract the patents they had obtained, so we do not know which patents should be attributed to each of the spouses.

Mariano and Henriette did not have children. Henriette’s only direct descendants were the children of her sister Marie: Lucette Genevieve Marie Nicault (who married Robert Achille Mimin⁷⁵) and Marcel León Nicault.

As Henriette’s nephew and niece died many years ago, only their descendants may know something about the private life of Henriette.

After the death of her husband, Henriette ceased all creative activity: she withdrew from the Giudecca factory after its sale to Elsie McNeill and halted production of the dresses that she had worked on up to that time in the Palazzo Orfei. With initial authorisation granted, Henriette decided to halt production of the Delphos (her most prized creation) in Giudecca under the control of Condesa Gozzi⁷⁶.

Freed from the restraints of her artistic activity, Henriette devoted the final period of her life, some 16 years, to cataloguing and reorganising her husband’s assets⁷⁷.

78 In DE OSMA, G.: “Mariano Fortuny, arte, ciencia y diseño” Ed. Ollero y Ramos, pages 271 and following.

79 According to the handwritten testament of Mariano Fortuny signed on 23 September 1948, and registered with number 34606 in the notary’s office of D. Luigi Candiani on 10 July 1949, by request of the lawyer Bruno Marelli.

Copies of these testaments are included in the work by NICOLÁS MARTÍNEZ, M^a de M.: “Mariano Fortuny y Madrazo. Entre la modernidad y la tradición”, doctoral thesis, Universidad de Granada, Departamento de Historia del Arte. Both testaments both testaments can also be found in the Mariutti Fortuny collection at the Biblioteca Marciana in Venice.

Today, we know that Henriette made numerous donations to institutions as diverse as the *Museo del Prado*, the *Museu Nacional d’Art de Catalunya*, the *Museu de Reus*, the *Calcografía Nacional* in Madrid and *Le Stanze del Vetro* in Venice. Finally, after it was rejected by the Spanish authorities, she donated what had been her marital home (today the Palazzo Pessaro Fortuny) to the city of Venice⁷⁸.

Nobody knew the wishes of Mariano Fortuny as well as Henriette, and she had full power to act on them, having been named his sole heir without restriction⁷⁹.

Many of Henriette’s actions reveal how carefully she was intent on carrying out her late husband’s wishes. For example, she gifted to the Portrait Gallery of the Uffizi in Florence a self-portrait by her father-in-law in his youth, and another portrait by her husband painted for the same purpose. This was the express wish of Mariano Fortuny, expressed in a testament drawn up in 1946, although Henriette was not obliged to execute its contents as it was subsequently revoked. However, knowing what her husband’s wishes had been, she saw that they were carried out, and the two portraits now hang in the Florentine gallery.

The institutions that benefitted from these legacies owe a debt of gratitude to a woman who was generous with both her assets and her time, and later generations owe her the recognition due to an artist and inventor of her stature.

Despite this, Henriette Nigrin is still known solely for her role as companion and muse to Mariano Fortuny. Perhaps the time has come for history to acknowledge the true merits of this influential inventor and textile creator; for Henriette to finally emerge from her husband’s shadow. ●

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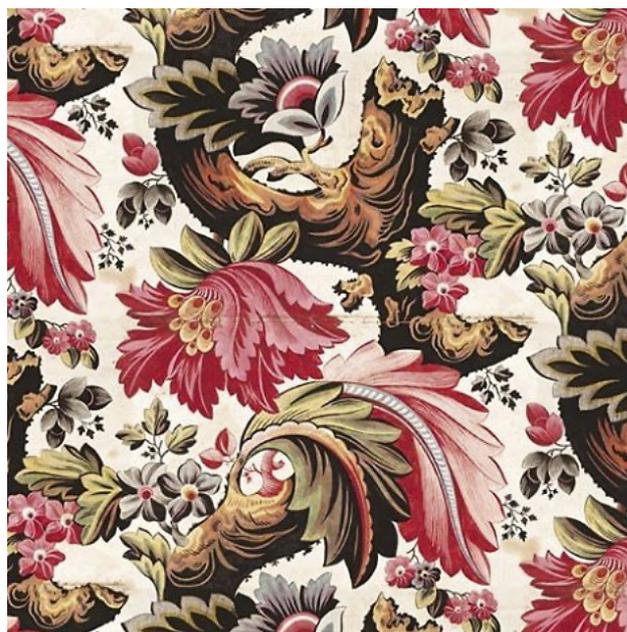
***Llibre de mostres de la fàbrica de Josep Anton Fàbregas, Igualada, 1815 /
Llibre de colors de Josep Anton Fàbregas, Igualada 1813***

ISBN: 978-84-617-6457-0. Igualada, 2016

■ **Sílvia Ventosa**

Calicos – in Catalan, *indianes* – sparked a revolutionary change in the way homes were furnished and decorated, emerging alongside sweeping changes in protoindustrial textile manufacturing and the general use of fabrics, and even changes in architecture, urban planning and the Catalan economy in the eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries. These printed cotton fabrics were an ideal match for the European love of oriental exoticism. As well as brightly coloured, calicos were resistant to water and light and met the new hygiene standards demanded by modern European society. The attractiveness of the fabrics and the rapid turnover of new designs set new trends, and the possibility of mass production meant that the market could grow exponentially. There were calicos for all tastes and pockets, this cross-class accessibility making them the definitive fabrics of the first preindustrial fashion.

Recent years have seen renewed interest in calicos, which can be found in numerous private and public collections across Catalonia. In 2006, the Premià de Mar Textile Printing Museum opened an exhibition that documents the entire calico printing process, and in 2007, the Sabadell History Museum organised the temporary exhibition *Indianes, estampats* (Calicos, printed fabrics). In 2011, specialists in a variety of disciplines brought their knowledge of calico to a wider audience through the seminar *La indústria de les indianes a Barcelona. 1730-1850*, organised by the Historical Archive of the City of Barcelona. Participants learned about many different aspects of the fabrics and their production, from their use for clothing and interiors to manufacturing



techniques and the impact of economic and urban changes over the period in question. Following on from the seminar, in 2013 the Barcelona City History Museum organised the exhibition *Indianes, 1736-1847. Els orígens de la Barcelona industrial*. When the Barcelona Design Museum was opened in 2014, it showcased a small but representative sample of its collection of calicos as part of the permanent exhibition *Extraordinàries, Col·leccions d'arts decoratives i arts d'autor (segles III-XX)*, which is still open to the public.

In this book, which looks at the work of the Igualada manufacturer *Jospe Anton Fàbregas*, we find a wealth of new details about the fascinating world of calicos. The book is divided into two parts. The first, *Llibre de mostres de la fàbrica de Josep Anton Fàbregas* (Sample book from

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the factory of Josep Anton Fàbregas) contains twenty-two sketches of calicos decorated with plant motifs, birds and insects, Biblical scenes and representations from mythology. It includes two designs that feature fortifications and walled cities. Motifs are large and attractively designed in reds, yellows, browns and blacks, produced using natural dyes. The second part is a facsimile edition of the *Llibre de colors de Josep Anton Fàbregas* (Josep Anton Fàbregas colour book), which preceded Carlos Ardit's *Tratado teórico y práctico de la fabricación de pintados ó indianas*, published in 1819, reproduces a manuscript of forty-eight formulas that provides valuable new information for research into dyeing materials and mordants, colour names and the various dyeing processes.

The introduction by Isabel Campi discusses the practical and aesthetic qualities of these printed cottons. Assumpta Dangla, meanwhile, looks at the history of the first calico manufacturers in Catalonia and describes the complex production process and natural dyeing techniques. She

also examines the importance of aesthetically appealing decoration and the need to address new themes to match the changing tastes of successive eras.

The original sketches and manuscript are conserved in the private collection of Lluís Roset. In 2013, the Combalia family showed a selection of sketches from the *Llibre de mostres* and a reproduction of the *Llibre de colors* at the Portal del Llevador exhibition hall in Igualada. The display was the starting point for this painstakingly edited book, published in three languages and featuring beautiful photography by Manel Armengol. Support was provided by the Barcelona Provincial Council and the Design History Foundation.

The question we ask now is whether calicos are once again becoming fashionable. It could be argued that they never truly lost their appeal, particularly among scholars, and it is far from impossible that the next great trend may be a return to printed fabrics with bold floral designs and vibrant colours. ■

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1st Colloquium of Textile and Fashion Researchers

■ Neus Ribas

On 17 November the Terrassa Textile Museum and Documentation Centre will host the 1st Colloquium of Textile and Fashion Researchers, an event that aims to bring the work of researchers in these fields to the awareness of a wider public. The programme is wide-reaching, reflecting a desire to showcase work from the widest possible range of disciplines: textile history, history of fashion, sociology and semiotics, textile art, textile innovation, sustainability, theatre and film costume, and specific techniques such as embroidery, printing, lace-making and tapestry. This first edition of the event has been organised with Spanish researchers in mind, while subsequent editions will target a more international audience.

The Colloquium will begin with an address by Dr Lesley Miller, Senior Curator of Textiles and Fashion at the Victoria and Albert Museum

in London and Professor of Dress and Textile History at the University of Glasgow, on the subject “Interwoven stories: 40 years of textile research. A personal vision”. The day will continue with a series of thematically grouped talks.

The Colloquium is organised by the Fundació Història del Disseny (Design History Foundation) and its affiliated Textile and Fashion Research Group, which was formed in 2016 as a means of bringing together researchers in the many disciplines linked to the world of fashion and textiles, in particular art, anthropology, history and communication. Members include important figures from universities, museums, the culture sector and other fields.

Designers, students, researchers and enthusiasts will all be welcome at the CDMT on 17 November 2017. ■



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Temporary exhibition

Inventing tradition. Clothing and identities

Museu Valencià d'Etnologia, Valencia
Until 30th April 2017

■ **Sílvia Ventosa**

The curator Sunsió García Zanón, from the Valencian Museum of Ethnology, and the researcher Xavier Rausell built this exhibition around the theory of Hobsbawm and Ranger set out in their defining work, *The Invention of Tradition* (1983), which brought about a radical change in the way we study traditions, which can be viewed as relics of the past often have unique stories to tell. This idea informs the exhibition's focus on the relativity of these "fixed" assets of our cultural heritage, such as festivals and traditional dress, particularly in a society like that of Valencia where identity is rooted to an extraordinary extent in popular tradition, a fact that is apparent in fundamental areas of social and economic life and in the symbols that typify the region. The willingness to show that "traditional" Valencian dress reflects the tastes of a particular social class at a given point in history – of the people who instigated these trends and others who imitated them, imbuing them with notions of community – is unquestionably an act of daring in a society that values and strives to conserve its traditional festivals. Yet it is exactly the evolution and transformation of customs that make traditions so vital and diverse. The exhibition features examples of the most emblematic local dress, worn by the peasant farmers of the Horta of Valencia, which has undergone transformations through individual changes and the influence of the predominant styles of middle classes. As the curators explain, "The exhibition tells us about how the notion of a Valencian identity first emerged, symbolised in garments that are considered to represent the essence of the Valencian Country. It tells us about



the influences that this essence has received from socioeconomic and political movements, from international events, and simply from changes in popular fashions that have been moulded to new uses by Valencian men and women". For the specific case of Valencia, they take the example of the eighteenth century, which was the inspiration for designers of traditional dress in the 1980s, who were looking for a past in which to identify themselves.

The exhibition is divided into three spaces. The first reproduces a museum storage room as exhibition display, showcasing various garments arranged by type. The second represents a catwalk along which visitors walk between the exhibits, marking an interesting change of roles and perspective. To the left are chronologically ordered groups of mannequins and rows of folding chairs, laid out as if for spectators at a fashion show. The display progresses from the 1830s to the 1980s, comparing the fashions of

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each period with the traditional dress that was popular at the time. To the right of the catwalk a selection of fashion accessories, documents and garments from each of these periods. The third space contains original garments from are displayed the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries that have been used as theatre costume and yet remain in an excellent state of conservation. The exhibition concludes with a display of the latest creations of the Valencian designer Francis Montesinos, who reimagines popular dress for the haute couture market. The models are accompanied by a video report on his September 2016 show at the Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week in Madrid, titled “Montesinos Heritage”, which highlights the unique characteristics of his creative journey and the strength of his Valencian roots.

The exhibition catalogue contains articles by a variety of authors on fashion, traditional clothing and identity, and textile restoration and conservation, which set out the theoretical background to the exhibits. It also contains a precise inventory of the items on display. Each article has been put together with the greatest scientific rigour, and considerable care has been taken to select the most representative exhibits. The narrative is an audacious one, arguing that what we believe to be immutable traditions may have been created or invented for a particular reason, often with a clearly defined beginning (and perhaps also an end). The exhibition and its accompanying catalogue mark a watershed in the study of popular customs and, in particular, of the significance of traditional clothing in contemporary society. ■

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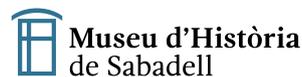
NATALIA ÁLVAREZ AND ADOLFO R. PADRÓN

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