CSA Midwest Regional Symposium 2023
Appropriation and Cultural Capital: Fashion’s Conflicted Obsession

Friday October 13 - Saturday October 14
Cleveland, Ohio
COSTUME SOCIETY OF AMERICA

Mission
The Costume Society of America fosters an understanding of appearance and dress practices of people across the globe through research, education, preservation, and design. Our network of members studies the past, examines the present, and anticipates the future of clothing and fashion.

About
The Costume Society of America (CSA) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization founded on March 23, 1973, and incorporated in the state of New York on September 12, 1973. CSA serves its members, and promotes its goals with national symposia and publications including the journal Dress and its monthly electronic newsletter CSA e-News. The organization began forming regional groups in 1978. There are six regional groups in the United States and Canada, and one international group. Individual regions hold annual meetings, sponsor programs and publish newsletters.

Overview
CSA serves individuals, students, institutions, and libraries. Our primary membership consists of individuals from a wide variety of backgrounds, both generalist and specialist, who share a passion for the history and serious study of costume. We seek members who are involved in the study, education, collection, and preservation, presentation, and interpretation of dress and appearance in our past, present, and future.

Thank you
The Costume Society of America would like to thank the host city of Cleveland, the Hyatt Hotel staff, our keynote speaker Dr. Tameka Ellington, museum sponsors: Cleveland Museum of Art, Western Reserve Historical Society, Kent State University and Grand Rapids Public Museum as well the organizing committee members: Patricia Edmonson, Sarah Scaturro, Darnell Lisby, Echo Malleo, Adam MacPhàrlain, Sara Wilcox, Shiman Li, Joshua Simon and Andrea Melvin.
### SCHEDULE

**Thursday October 12, 2023**

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<tr>
<td>Symposium registration</td>
<td>4-6 pm</td>
<td>Registration at Hyatt entrance</td>
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**Friday October 13, 2023**

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<tr>
<td>Symposium registration</td>
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<td>Registration at Hyatt entrance</td>
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<td>Bus pickup at Hyatt</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Cleveland Museum of Art</strong> Tours</td>
<td>10 - 12:30 pm</td>
<td>CMA 11150 East Blvd</td>
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<td>(Egyptomania Exhibit, Conservation Labs, Degas and the Laundress Exhibit)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lunch on your own</td>
<td>12:30 - 1:30 pm</td>
<td>CMA and/or Uptown restaurants on Euclid</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Western Reserve Historical Society</strong> Tours</td>
<td>1:30 - 3:30 pm</td>
<td>WRHS 10825 East Blvd</td>
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<td>(Costume Storage and Exhibit Tours)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bus Pick Up for Return to Hyatt</td>
<td>3:30 pm</td>
<td>Pick up at WRHS</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Costume Society of America Book Series Titles for Sale by Kent State University Press</strong></td>
<td>4:30 pm</td>
<td>Hyatt Meeting Room Emmanual</td>
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<tr>
<td>Keynote Speaker: <strong>Dr. Tameka Ellington</strong>, &quot;Black Hair in a White World: the cultural ramifications of Black hair appropriation in the 20th and 21st century&quot;</td>
<td>5 - 6 pm</td>
<td>Hyatt Meeting Room Emmanual</td>
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<td>Dinner on your own</td>
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**Saturday October 14, 2023**

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<tr>
<td>Symposium registration</td>
<td>8-9 am</td>
<td>Hyatt Outside Meeting Room Emmanual</td>
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<tr>
<td>Morning presenters: presentation download</td>
<td>8-9 am</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Welcome</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>CSA Midwest Region Welcome and Regional Updates</td>
<td>9 - 9:15 am</td>
<td>Hyatt Meeting Room Emmanual</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Plenary Session 1</strong> Payton Becker: <em>An ancient example of appropriation</em>, Sara</td>
<td>9:15 - 10:30 am</td>
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<td>10:30 - 10:45 am</td>
<td><em>Dress Journal Information Session</em>, Einav Rabinovitch-Fox</td>
<td>Hyatt Meeting Room <em>Burlington</em></td>
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<td>10:45 - 11 am</td>
<td><em>Break</em></td>
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| 11-11:50 pm       | **Plenary Session 2**  
|                    | Shiman Li: *Depictions of Female Images in Tang Dynasty Costume Dramas* and John Finkelberg: *Fantasies of Empire* |                                    |
| 12 - 1 pm          | *Lunch*                                                               | *Hyatt Meeting Room Burlington*    |
| 1 - 1:20           | Leon Weibers, President-Elect  
|                    | Updates on upcoming National Symposums via Zoom                      |                                    |
| 1:20 - 2:10 pm     | **Plenary Session 3**  
|                    | Magdelena Samulski: *Fashion Reconstructions* and Melissa Gamble: *Mind the Gap* |                                    |
| 2:10 - 2:25 pm     | *Break*                                                               |                                    |
| 2:25 - 3:45 pm     | **Plenary Session 4**  
| 3:45 - 4 pm        | *Wrap Up and Thank you*                                              |                                    |
| 4 pm - onward      | *Dinner and exploring on your own*                                   | *Downtown Cleveland*               |

**Sunday October 15, 2023**

Optional tour of [Kent State University Museum](#) (guests must find own transport or coordinate carpool)  
10am-11:30pm  
515 Hilltop Dr, Kent, OH
HOTEL INFORMATION

Hyatt Regency Cleveland at the Arcade
420 Superior Avenue East, Cleveland, Ohio, United States, 44114

Located in a landmark building constructed in 1890, Hyatt Regency Cleveland at The Arcade provides a historic hotel experience with convenient access to downtown Cleveland. Stay steps from the vibrant East 4th Street Entertainment District and a 10-minute walk from all major sporting and entertainment venues.

Hotel amenities include:

- Complimentary wireless internet
- 24-hour business center
- 24-hour StayFit™ Gym
- 1890 Restaurant and 1890 Lounge
- Marengo Luxury Spa, featuring massage, hair and nail services

Parking: Valet is available or self parking options at own expense

MUSEUM TOURS & BUSSING

Friday October 13 Museum Tours

Please meet at the hotel's 420 Superior Avenue East entrance for the bus which will leave promptly at 9:30am on Friday October 13. A list of those returning by bus will be taken at that time.

The Cleveland Museum of Art will provide guided tours of:
- Egyptomania: Fashion's Conflicted Obsession
- Degas and the Laundress: Women, Work, and Impressionism
- CMA's Conservation Labs

The Western Reserve Historical Society will provide guided tours of:
- Fashion After Dark
- Costume Storage Tour

There will likely be time to explore on your own as well.

The bus pick up for return to the hotel will take place promptly at 3:30 pm at the Western Reserve Historical Society WRHS 10825 East Blvd.

Sunday October 15 Optional Kent State Museum Tour

Thank you KSU Museum! This tour is an optional opportunity and carpooling will be recommended at guests own expense and coordination if they would like to participate.
KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Friday October 23, 2023, 5-6pm
Hyatt Regency Cleveland at the Arcade

Black Hair in a White World: The Cultural Ramifications of Black Hair Appropriation in the 20th and 21st century
Dr. Tameka Ellington

Dr. Tameka Ellington, the Black Beauty Activist, is a fashion scholar and speaker. She is the host for the Black Beauty Activist Podcast where she discusses critical conversations to raise the confidence and consciousness of the Black community. She co-curated the internationally acclaimed exhibition TEXTURES: the history and art of Black hair. Dr. Tameka is the 2020 Next Generation Indie Book Award winner via Himer Publishing. Her fifth book, Black Hair in a White World, was released in the summer of 2023 in the CSA Series by Kent State University Press.

“Be Confident. Be Authentic. Be Beautiful” is Dr. Tameka’s motto for women worldwide.
PRESENTATION ABSTRACTS

Plenary Session 1

An Ancient Example of Appropriation: How and Why Alexander the Great Appropriated the Royal Persian Costume
Payton Becker, University of Rhode Island

Alexander the Great is widely known as the Macedonian conqueror who unified Greece and subdued the Persian empire. The Greeks and Macedonians who made up the majority of his army and inner circle found Persian culture strange and extravagant. Alexander was the ruler of two very different peoples: the Western Greeks and Macedonians and the Eastern Persians. In what appears to be an attempt to unite these disparate cultures, Alexander the Great adopted Persian customs, including pieces of the royal Persian costume. The ancient sources, written a century or more after Alexander’s death, provide differing reasons as to why Alexander incorporated pieces of the royal Persian costume into his kingly ensemble and what exactly those pieces were. Through a comparison of ancient Greek and Roman sources on Alexander the Great, Philip II, historic Macedonian and Persian political relations, and Persian history, I extrapolate the how and why behind Alexander’s appropriation of the Persian royal costume.

While Macedonia did not have a long legacy of a royal costume before Alexander the Great’s accession to the throne, Persia did. This Persian royal costume identified the king and was a visual symbol of royal power, which, I argue, would have been necessary for Alexander to adopt if he wanted to succeed as the new Persian ruler. Among the items most important to the Persian royal costume is the court robe, or sarapis. 1 While none of the ancient authors name the sarapis as an item Alexander adopted, I argue that the term chiton may have been used in its place, using Xenophon’s use of chiton in describing the Persian royal costume as evidence.2 This would mean Alexander adopted both the symbol and manifestation of royal Persian power inherent within the sarapis. The reasoning here seems clear; although some ancient sources would claim corruption or a desire of luxury as Alexander’s reason, Plutarch’s sentiment makes the most sense when taken within the context of both Alexander’s aims and previous Macedonian and Persian relations.3 Plutarch states, “[it was] from a from a desire to adapt himself to the native customs, believing that the community of race goes far towards softening the hearts of men.”4 Alexander adopted royal Persian garments in order to establish himself as a new, legitimate Persian ruler. I argue that Alexander had no choice but to appropriate the crucial elements of Persian royal dress if he wanted the Persians to recognize him as a legitimate king of this newly conquered empire.

**After the Shawl: Refashioned Garments from Kashmir and Paisley Shawls**

Sara Wilcox, University of Minnesota

Kashmir and Paisley shawls feature prominently in the history of dress, international trade, and cultural appropriation throughout the 19th century, and their “exotic” aesthetic made them coveted status symbols. Once these beautiful, expensive garments were no longer en vogue, what became of them? Existing histories briefly explain that the shawls were sometimes remade into dolmans or mantles in the 1870s, but rarely describe their ongoing use to create a variety of other garments up to the present day. While refashioning of garments was common practice throughout history, researching refashioned garments is challenging because skilled dressmakers and tailors leave minimal evidence of transformation and photographs of the original garments are rarely available.

Garments made from Kashmir and Paisley shawls are unique because the original form is known. The shawls were large textiles, but had intricate center medallions, paisley motifs, and border designs to consider when cutting new garment pieces. Through examination of a refashioned garment’s construction we can deduce information about the original shawl’s size and pattern to gain insight into how makers used extant qualities of garments and elaborated upon them. We can also compare the silhouette and embellishments used in the reworked garments to their contemporary equivalents to determine how the shawl garments follow the fashions of their time. As with all upcycling projects, making a new garment from an old shawl rather than new fabric involves weighing economic, environmental, and aesthetic factors. Upcycled shawl garments save valuable shawls from the trash, but must meet the wearer’s desire to fit in or stand out.

This material culture study investigates garments made from Kashmir and Paisley shawls between 1865 and the present day and held in museum and private collections. Where possible, museum accession files for each garment are reviewed to determine the origin of the shawls and the garment’s maker and owner. Following the object-based “observe, reflect, interpret” method originated by Mida and Kim, each garment is analyzed regarding construction methods, linings, embellishments, and likely layout of pattern pieces on the original shawl. Incorporation of center medallions, large paisley motifs, and shawl borders are compared across garments to discover how existing aesthetic features of shawls were used in creating new garments. The shawl garments are analyzed relative to the trends of their time to determine how they respond to desirable elements for fashion. Knowledge of historic practices can inform current methods of upcycling to make fashion more sustainable, and these techniques are valuable for modern upcyclers reworking design elements of old garments into new creations.

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Everything’s Better With a War Bonnet On It!
Daniel James Cole, Fashion Institute of Technology

The Indian head penny was first minted in 1859, pre-dating many of the most notable atrocities against America’s native peoples and perhaps representing one of the earliest notable instances of the misappropriation of the war bonnet. In a wide range of expressions, from cigar-store Indian statues to sexually explicit pulp fiction, to textile design, to album covers, widely varied examples of such appropriations continued through the 20th century. In recent decades the the war bonnet has continued to be one of the most misappropriated items of dress, and the trend has become even more pointed, from a John Galliano collection for Dior collection in 1998, to Abercrombie and Fitch Indian head t-shirts, Victoria's Secret runway spectacles, to Coachella Festival get-up.

But while these incidents are well documented, the far-flung, even global, nature of this appropriation is perhaps less familiar. While on fieldwork in island Southeast Asia, it was noted that imitation Native American crafts were in abundance in souvenir shops that supposedly sold artifacts of their own local indigenous cultures, and authentic pieces of cultural heritage from around the world. While locally fabricated “dream catchers’ ‘ were a common offering at these shops, most notable among these appropriations were facsimiles of the Plains Indians’ war bonnet.

The wearing of the war bonnet as a party hat, in the manner of Coachella Festival style, is apparent in clubs, frequently in an LGBT context sometimes worn with little else than briefs. Further investigation both in fieldwork and on social media revealed the popularity of an “Indian Chief “ masquerade costume, particularly in Indonesia and Malaysia. Further, the manufacture of war bonnet facsimiles, with varying degrees of adaptation from original sources, was a very active cottage industry in Bali. Fashion shows in the area have included war bonnets on runway models in collections that were not otherwise native-inspired.

This research examines this trend in Southeast Asia and puts it into the context of other Asian appropriations/appreciations such as Gothic Lolita and Rickabirry-ku fashions. It also questions a common assessment that cultural misappropriation is a phenomenon that represents behaviors of Western colonizer nations toward non-Western cultures and looks at this definition of cultural misappropriation as something that may be incomplete.
Plenary Session 2

Depictions of Female Images in Tang Dynasty Costume Dramas
Shiman Li, University of Minnesota

Tang Dynasty historical costume dramas have been popular since the 1990s as Tang is the only ancient dynasty in China with a female ruler, Wu, Zetian. These dramas have been attracting big audiences in China—especially females. Female characters in Tang Dynasty Dramas have been depicted with many changes in image, personality, and mental values.

Costumes of the Tang Dynasty Dramas have become the field where the authenticity of the past folds with the reality of the present (Zheng, 2020). Hollander (1993) explains that the look of clothing is primarily based on the contemporary visual impulse and does not necessarily depict its origins. She supposed costumes were designed to cater to the audience’s aesthetic taste and imagination of the female image. However, debates continue about whether costumes need to be authentic in their depiction of history. This research focuses on depictions of costumes in the Tang dynasty, and how they reflect the current ideology.

Designers of costume dramas could not say their designs accurately represent Tang history as no entire costume ensembles of the Tang Dynasty have been excavated. Therefore, even the historians studying frescoes and paintings from the Tang Dynasty are not sure of the real life of that era. For example, painters might include extra details on costumes to satisfy the taste of the ruler or buyer. For dramas of Wu, Zetian in 1995 and Tang, Ming Huang in 1994, their costume designs have become the model for later films and television shows about Tang Dynasty. And their influence can be seen in later Tang Dynasty Dramas.

Images from Mogao Caves have been appropriated by designers and have influenced the costume design in Tang costume dramas. Established in the 4th century AD, Mogao Caves contain some of the finest examples of Buddhist art in ancient China. In the Tang dynasty, Mogao became a religious center and the main hub of commerce on the Silk Road. The art of Mogao covers more than ten genres. Wall paintings and sculptures were the main references to the Tang dynasty; images focused on the costume design of two female characters—Wu, Zetian and Yang, Yuhuan. Material culture methods structure this research that involves approaches of image and design theories, and historical costume studies (Prown, 1982, Prown & Haltman, 2000; Rose, 2016; Tilley, 1999).

Using material culture methods, this research shows the appearances of women of the Tang Dynasty, the procedure, and visual evidence of the changes in costumes from the Tang Dynasty to the Tang Dynasty Dramas. With analysis of visual evidence, the Tang Dynasty Drama costumes provide a specific resource as they have become a hybrid of real historical factors and contemporary imaginary design.

The female as seen from a different power perspective by a contemporary audience has resulted in changing perspectives about Tang. Constructed by contemporary designers, these costume images seem to have provoked a combined ideology of ancient and current female authenticity that is not necessarily Tang in origin.

**Fantasies of Empire: French Middle-Class Men, Algerian Cashmere, and Consuming the Empire, 1830-1870**

John Finkelberg, Washington State University

Between 1830 and 1848, as French armies continued their invasion and colonization of Algeria, Parisian tailors, manufacturers, and retailers encouraged middle-class and elite French men to participate in the colonization of North Africa through the conspicuous consumption of Algeria fabrics and Orientalized “domestic costumes.” Advertisements for “domestic costumes” and dressing gowns in French fashion periodicals and daily newspapers that represented men in various stages of undress speak to the ways advertisers used male bodies and masculine intimacy to present menswear as an obligatory sign of self-care under all circumstances. In these advertisements social position is not just about participating in certain activities but also about a sense of individuality and care of the self that transcends the circumstances of any given action, and which needs to be expressed visually through clothing. While selling intimacy and comfort, advertisements for dressing gowns also sold men an opportunity to participate in the victory over North Africa through the consumption of expensive and luxurious Algerian cashmeres, or when funds were limited, dressing gowns made from French fabrics with Orientalized patterns and embroideries, especially after the formal colonization of Algeria in 1848. This paper uses fashion reports, personal correspondences, inventories of wardrobes, and extant garments to show how the project of empire was predicated on encouraging middle-class and elite men to consume the empire.
Plenary Session 3

*Fashion Reconstructions and the Problems of Historical Appropriation*
Magdelena Samulski, Trent University, Canada

Public or communal memory has a key part to play in fashion and fashion history. ¹ Textile arts object collections tend to be understood as time capsules for a specific historic period and space rather than something of aesthetic value to the individual wearer. If fashion objects are understood through their connections with the body they house, what happens when the fashion object is taken out of its intended space and place? Clothing understood as being representative of a very specific time and place often doesn’t take into account the individual reality and some of the personal aspects of clothing or the act of dressing. A continued focus on what was avant-garde and new rather than part of the everyday act of dressing tends to lead fashion historians and their theoretical approaches to a very definitive and somewhat limited understanding of fashion history (Petrov, 2019). While these specialist garments are important for capturing both historic and modern considerations of textile culture, the fashionably novel will never allow for a more complete story of a period’s dress culture. As part of this problem in public memory, seeing these innovative textiles as communally representative leads to misconceptions and an appropriation of history that misconstrues the reality of our ancestors’ textile cultures.

This paper seeks to answer the following questions: How does this understanding of fashion as a cultural index and narrative challenge our understanding of history and the problems that lie in trying to produce a historic narrative through reconstructed cloth? Where do we fall short in our reconstructions of textiles, and in our understanding of time and aging through the theoretical approaches to fashion and dressing? By studying practitioners known as reconstructionists from the fashion community, this paper seeks to address some of the underlying problems we still have in relying on public memory and the understanding that fashion artifacts are representative of a community rather than an individual ² (Peirson-Smith, 2020). Reproduction in non historic settings as well as high fashion couturier dress-practice attempt to create ongoing relevance in keeping past textile trades alive through re-enactment. Reconstruction practice allows for the democratization of textile studies but it can also become problematic in its focus on visual entertainments that reinforce misconceptions rooted in public memory.

In analyzing re-enactment approaches (Smith & Stannard, 2016), I argue that we allow for a less biased approach to historic fashion that will account for more regional, communal, and individual tastes in dress. This method of inquiry permits a more balanced understanding of dressing ideals across socioeconomic levels in terms of garment reproduction. Further addressing the personal in re-enactsments reinforces the unique nature of each garment and its relationship with the body as part of fashion’s corporeal register.

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¹ Collective memory or public memory as a key part of social integration relies on intergenerational knowledge. A key element of inspiration in historical record keeping that relies on a group’s attitudes rather than factual data. Consider the continued misinformation around turn of the century corsetry perpetuated by film and amateur costumers today brought about through social narratives.
The survey identified key factors that costumers and historians undergo when taking on a reconstructionist project such as regional focus and budget limitations. This helped to highlight some of the biases we as a community still undergo in trying to capture historic periods through dress.

Sources: Samulski, Magdelena “Historic Reproduction Survey” Trent University Research Ethics Board, May 2023
**Mind The Gap: Intellectual Property, Cultural Appropriation, and New Technologies**
Melissa Gamble, Columbia College

This research addresses new legal and ethical issues for unprotected communities arising from the expansive application of generative artificial intelligence technologies (AI) into the fashion industry and mainstream society and the sustainability implications found within. Scholarship addressing the lack of protections of traditional knowledge (TK) and traditional cultural expressions (TCE) provided by conventional intellectual property systems is considerable. These gaps leave communities worldwide open to misappropriation of their traditional knowledge and expressions that make-up their identities, religions, medicines and wellbeing, daily living practices, and means to self-sustain. Recent scholarship recognizes that these gaps result in not only an inequitable system, but a system that threatens the sustainability of communities around the world. The inequities the system promulgates within the fashion industry is well-documented. Artificial intelligence technologies that rely on massive datasets for training and learning expand this gap exponentially creating the potential for large-scale misappropriation, failure to identify, failure to attribute, failure to protect TK and TCEs resulting in loss of cultural, economic, and community resources, identities, and more.

This paper reviews recent and critical scholarly work on intellectual property and cultural appropriation and investigates ways in which AI broadens the legal, ethical and sustainability implications for unprotected communities. With the rise of this new technology, one must consider if and how conventional western forms of property ownership and frameworks should continue to apply. Sui generis systems exist that could be expanded, or are new models needed to address new types of cultural expression and protect traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions and source communities? Finally, a look at the ways in which the fashion industry can develop practices to avoid misappropriation within this new context will be considered.

**Plenary Session 4**

**Cultural Dominance and Transculturation: A Case Study of a Cloud Collar in China**
Yiling Zhang, University of Minnesota

This case study aims to examine cultural appropriation in the design of a contemporary Chinese cloud collar, a collaboration between a Chinese youth fashion brand and Japanese gift company Sanrio in 2021. Rogers (2006) categorizes cultural appropriation into four types, and recent research in fashion studies emphasizes one of them — cultural exploitation (e.g., Green and Kaiser 2017; Kawamura and de Jong 2021). By contrast, this cloud collar is an example of “cultural dominance” and “transculturation”, two other types of cultural appropriation (Rogers 2006). It is created by a subordinated cultural group and borrows elements simultaneously from the dominant home culture and contemporary foreign culture. This study asks the research questions: How is the cloud collar reimagined and recreated through cultural appropriation? What does the design of the cloud collar indicate about the young generation’s identity construction in China?
The choice of the topic is inspired by a Chinese cloud-collar medallion at the Cleveland Museum of Art. As an accessory, the cloud collar takes the form of the motif and is worn on top of a robe and around the neck. It has at least four identical lobes of embroidery, and each lobe is usually in a ruyi cloud shape, with auspicious symbols. Despite its over one thousand years' history in China, it disappeared from Chinese people’s everyday life with the collapse of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911 AD). Therefore, the designers of the cloud collar in Figure 1 bring the historic accessory back to contemporary China. Figure 2. A Fragment of a Cloud-Collar Medallion from China, the Cleveland Museum of Art.

The object analysis (Prown 1982) suggests that this cloud collar borrows the form of a four-lobed ruyi cloud collar, but the incorporation of the cute elements, inspired by the Sanrio character My Melody, makes it seriously depart from the latter. For example, the bottom of the pink heart icon becomes a part of a ruyi cloud. The cute and pastel patterns replace the auspicious symbols, which used to communicate where the piece was worn.

This study also delves into the social and cultural context in contemporary to unpack the meaning of the cloud collar. Hanfu, Lolita fashion, and the Japanese school uniform have been the most popular youth fashion cultures in China since the late 2010s. The hanfu movement pursues nationalism by revitalizing the historical fashion practice of the Han race (Wu 2009; Carrico 2017), and the cloud collar, as a traditional accessory, reappears in Chinese everyday life among the hanfu culture followers. The success of Lolita fashion and the Japanese school uniform in China reveals the young generation’s celebration of the taste of cuteness and girliness. The cloud collar in Figure 1 was designed in such a context to attract teenagers and young women who adore historical Han clothing and contemporary Japanese girl culture. While the design of the cloud collar emphasizes tradition and nationalism, it also adores contemporary foreign culture. It communicates the ambivalence (Davis 1992) of subjectivity among the young generation, underpinned by the omnipresent transnational cultural flows.

1. The four types of cultural appropriation, according to Rogers’ (2006) classification, are cultural exchange, cultural dominance, cultural exploitation, and transculturation. Cultural exchange happens between two cultural counterparts with relatively equal power. Cultural dominance means a subordinated group’s borrowing of cultural elements from a dominant one, while cultural exploitation refers to the opposite direction of cultural borrowing without permission or compensation. Transculturation means the creation of hybrid culture without the original source. 2. Cloud collar as a motif might be developed from the pattern at the back of the Chinese bronze mirror around the third and fourth century BCE. It has been widely used in Chinese material cultures, such as ceramics, furniture, and textiles. See Cammann’s (1951) discussion on the history of the motif. 3. Shen (2002) reviews the history of the cloud collar in China, including the changing style, practice, and context of wearing it. Its earliest representation was in a religious painting at the Dunhuang cave around the 6th century. Before it vanished in the early twentieth century, it was a fashionable accessory among Chinese women in the Qing Dynasty (Silberstein 2017).
Pharaohs on the Runway: Examining the Ancient Past and Political Present in Egyptian Fashion
Liz Trapp, Columbus College of Art and Design

In May 2023, in the shadow of the great Archeological Museum in Cairo - Egypt held its first ever fashion week in an exuberant display of innovative design steeped in century’s old tradition. In a culture which is most often perceived in the past tense, Egypt asserted its vision for the future in a gold and glittering spectacle as grand as the city of Cairo itself.

I traveled to Cairo on a political diplomacy fellowship in 2014 and in the shadows of the great pharaonic monuments, the country was reeling from the upheaval of the Arab Spring and preparing for its political future. The revolutionary spirit was strong, and even then, street art and material culture (namely revolutionary graffiti) were a vision of revived ancient tradition applied to the political present. Everything was fresh, spirited, driven.

In ten years since the Arab Spring, that fresh revolutionary spirit of Egypt has solidified itself as the next iteration of an empire. Layered on the ancient stones and pharaonic hieroglyphic texts are an identity of a culture which is built on generosity and self-determination, the very basis of the revolutionary spirit.

Fashion history itself has not been generous to Egyptian culture. Of the many layers of cultural appropriation and assimilation which has barely died down since the first modern wave of ‘Egyptomania’ which hit in the early 1920s after Carter’s discovery of King Tutankhamen’s tomb – examples include designers from the 1920s including Thurn and Madeline & Madeline, Dior 2004, Alice Temperly 2013/14, Zuhair Murad spring 2020, Dior 2022 and the list goes on as is so aptly displayed in the Cleveland Museum of Art exhibition.

But in May of 2023 Egyptian designers reclaimed Egyptian identity, paying homage to the past and embracing the post-Arab Spring sense of renewal – that renewal which is so intrinsic to Egyptian culture and is one the most spectacular parts. From the glittering gold of Marie Louis’ designs which play off the pharaonic age, to the reimagined and restructured sleek and geometric menswear from Moaaz El Behairy, Egyptian designers are reinventing fashion. This paper will situate Egyptian fashion designers at the exciting crosshairs of a culture both entrenched in history, and predicated on renewal as it enters its Post-Arab Spring Era and redefines what Egyptian fashion means to the world. At its core, is a reclamation of Egyptian identity.
Cultural Crossroads: Fashions of North Africa
Sara Hume, Kent State University Museum

I am currently working on curating an exhibition on fashion in North Africa, which will focus on how, with its pivotal location at a cultural crossroads between Europe, Sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East, the region has developed a rich and diverse fashion culture. As an American working on an exhibition about a different culture, particularly one that has been the subject of an Orientalist western gaze for centuries, I have been very conscious of my own perspective and approach. I have partnered with a co-curator who is of Egyptian and Algerian heritage. This exhibition follows an earlier exhibition I organized in 2016 which focused on fashions of southern Africa – specifically South Africa and Namibia. This series of exhibitions highlights the tremendous variety across the African continent.

In developing this project, we push back against the conventions in the discipline of fashion history of drawing sharp binaries between modern vs. traditional, western vs. non-western, and fashion vs. folk. In this talk I will discuss the ways that North African fashion has been catalogued and displayed by museums in the past. Non-western fashion including objects from North Africa and the Middle East has been stored separately from Western fashions. Rather than organized chronologically or by designer they are grouped geographically. Similarly, they are conventionally exhibited separately and contextualized according to their “traditions” and “symbols.” In my work as a curator, I have sought to display garments from different cultures side by side, selected according to the same criteria. The upcoming North African exhibition in fact calls into question these distinctions drawn between Western and non-western fashion. People mistakenly assume that the increasing globalization of the fashion industry leads ultimately to growing homogenization. The stylistic distinction of North African fashion derives in part from the ways the influence of European, Middle Eastern and African fashion layers on the indigenous styles of the Amazigh and Arabs. Many designers draw inspiration from the region’s dress styles including caftans, hooded capes known as djellebas, and heavily embroidered karakous, which are often integrated with elements of cosmopolitan dress. The aesthetic choices of the designers are only one way that they are engaged in cross cultural interplay. The designers operate in an industry developed within a European framework based around fashion weeks and fashion curricula established by European schools. However, they are economically bound to markets which span the Mediterranean, cross the Sahara, and extend throughout the Arab world. In this presentation I will look at contemporary fashion design as well as photography by artists and social media influencers to showcase not just how North Africans dress but also how these dress practices fit into a global context.