

ACQUISITIONS STRATEGY – CLOTHING AND TEXTILES COLLECTION

A. COLLECTIONS AND PROGRAMS

A. Describe the purpose of the Collection and why it is maintained by the unit

Clothing and textiles are integral to the study of societies past and present. They reflect critical features of systems of production, idioms of design and patterns of use – all topics addressed within the Department of Human Ecology. Clothing in particular opens a window into social practice; and individual items of apparel can provide invaluable evidence to social science and humanities researchers (student and faculty). This collection enables students and researchers to better understand how garments are made, how clothing interacts with the human body, and the function of fashion within various communities. Such information cannot be gleaned from an image: the actual object is essential to understand the influences of textiles and clothing in the lives of peoples from different time periods, regions and ethnicities.

Founded in 1972, the collection is among the five largest clothing and textiles collections in Canada. It is the only clothing and textile collection of its size and significance held in a university setting in the country. Collection objects are used in the classroom and in research and are an integral part of undergraduate and graduate teaching and facilitate community outreach for the University of Alberta.

B. Type of Material in Current Collection

This unique collection houses more than 23,000 clothing and textile-related artifacts, spanning over 350 years of history, with local, national, and international significance. The collection specializes in:

- High fashion items that mark the silhouette of their time including clothing and accessories, from the 18th century to the present.
- Ethnographic textiles and garments, especially those showing cross-cultural influences. Current collection strengths include Japan, China, Indonesia and Guatemala.
- Material culture objects that document things used every day related to either clothing or textiles.
- Tools and equipment used in the design, production or embellishment of clothing or textiles.

C. List the academic programs supported by the Collection

Many of the courses offered by the Department of Human Ecology, Material Culture & Design Studies and History & Classics make artifacts from the collection an integral part of coursework. Objects are used in teaching costume and textile history, textile science, apparel design, product development, material culture and museum studies. Faculty members in all disciplines are invited to use the collection as a resource within courses.

Students are invited to access the collection through class visits and practicums. Faculty members and researchers in all disciplines are invited to use the collection as a resource within courses. Students are



encouraged to use the collection for case studies in courses such as design, history, business, marketing, material culture and museum studies. Exhibitions may be organized by students at the graduate and undergraduate levels. Exhibitions may be the result of research or a group effort organized as part of a specific class. With the exception of gallery viewing, all research visits for students, faculty members, researchers and community members must be made by appointment.

1.1. Undergraduate Program

- HECOL 241 (Fashion Industries): 15-30 students/year
- HECOL 250 (Design Studies and Practice): about 105 students/year - artifacts are used for analysis, critique, and specific characteristics or issues related to the production and consumption of material culture
- HECOL 254 (Apparel Design and Construction Fundamentals): 35 to 40 students/year - artifacts from the collection (both Western and non-Western clothing and textiles) are used for style and construction analysis and comparison, technique investigation, production process research, and inspiration.
- HECOL 268 (Survey of Historic Dress in the Western World): 64 to 67 students/year - small groups of students are brought to the Human Ecology building where artifacts are part of a review exercise at the end of the semester.
- HECOL 333 (Cross-cultural Textiles): 20 to 35 students/year - textiles from around the world are used to illustrate textile making techniques, traditional textile dyeing and decorating methods, and to discuss social and cultural issues influencing design of textiles. Students also work on research projects, focusing on ethnographic textiles from the collection and developing an exhibition featuring artifacts from the collection
- HECOL 353 (Textile Design I): about 20 students/year
- HECOL 354 (Apparel Design and Product Development): 35 to 40 students/year - artifacts from the collection are used for style and construction analysis and comparison, technique investigation, production process research, and inspiration.
- HECOL 360 (Dress and Culture): about 50 students/year - artifacts are brought to the classroom and students are asked to do a group presentation project that may make use of items from the collection.
- HIST 429/641 (Topics in British History: Rise of Consumer Society): 12 to 15 students/year - Students tour the collection as part of a workshop component.
- HECOL 453 (Textile Design II): about 20 students/year
- HECOL 454 (Apparel Design and Product Development II): 10-15 students/year
- HECOL 460 (19th, 20th and 21st Century Dress in the Western World): 26 to 30 students—offered in alternating years - artifacts are brought to the classroom. Students must select artifacts for projects conducted during the laboratory portion of the course.
- HECOL 462 (Material Culture in Home and Community): about 30 students—offered in alternating years - students will analyze artifacts or do research on a particular artifact or develop an exhibition featuring artifacts from the collection.



- HECOL 469/569 (Material Culture in Practice): 10-14 students/year—offered in alternating years - students will analyze artifacts or do research on a particular artifact or develop an exhibition featuring artifacts from the collection.
- HECOL 473/573 (Clothing and Materials for Sport and Safety): about 8 students/year
- HECOL 476 (Textile Analysis and Care): 10 to 20 students—offered in alternate years
- HECOL 490/501 (Independent Investigation in Human Ecology): 4-6 students/year— projects may include analysis, exhibition and research to explore textile conservation, cut, style technique investigation and production process research Students explore modes of deterioration that affect textile materials as they age, condition reports, careful wet cleaning, mounting, modest stabilization by stitching repairs, microscopy work and other investigations used to establish the condition or state of preservation of textiles
- HECOL 493/550 (Special Topics in Human Ecology): 8-12 students/year—offered in alternating years e.g. Design for Sustainability and Material Culture and Disability Studies and Design and Innovation

1.2. Graduate Program

- HECOL 661 (Perspectives on Material Culture): 4-8 students/year—offered in alternating years
- HECOL 662 (Themes in Material Culture): 5-10 students/year - In one seminar students also have the option to use one object, or collection of like objects in their major research paper..
- HECOL 668 (Material Culture and Curatorship): about 5 to 10 students—offered in alternating years - students are required to use artifacts for study and within the organization of an exhibition.
- HECOL 900 (Directed Research Project): varies - graduate research projects that require major sustained access to the collection for students' research requirements. This will remain a key area of use in the coming years.
- PhD graduate students may use the collection to support their research.

1.3. Research

- a. Collection use related to ongoing research in textile science may include:
Use of the collection as a source of known fibre samples for research into the early development and use of man-made, synthetic fibres.
- b. Collection use related to ongoing research in the humanities and social sciences may include:
Use of the collection for exhibition (topics vary) and for advancing knowledge on clothing and textiles within the field of history, dress history in particular. Artifacts may also be used within research programs that focus on disability studies, design processes and the education of designers. The collection is used to find examples that illustrate specific issues or theories in the humanities, the social sciences and in visual studies. Use of the collection can broaden understanding of material culture, and inspire, influence and motivate student and faculty research.
- c. Collection use to broaden knowledge and dissemination of our holding may include:



Use of the collection to introduce national and international researchers to the variety of artifacts held in the collection to advance knowledge in numerous fields of study. Research for comprehensive information on our artifacts to add to our knowledge and to post this information on the museum database (MIMSY) for others to access. Search for information that may assist academic staff and researchers with their projects. Research to perform appraisals of new donations and to help conduct tours and respond to queries from researchers within the academic community and the general public.

4. List community engagement programs/activities supported by the Collection

- **On campus displays:** Artifacts can be seen year round in the Human Ecology gallery and in hallways and display cases throughout campus. Exhibitions are organized by faculty members, collection staff and interns or students at the graduate and undergraduate levels, resulting from research or a group effort organized as part of a specific class.
- **Off campus displays:** Artifacts and exhibitions are loaned to institutions locally, nationally and internationally. Consideration is given to exhibitions that advance the mission and goals of our collection.
- **Tours:** Faculty members in all disciplines are invited to arrange for use of artifacts in the classroom. Community members access the Collection through guided tours of our unique storage and teaching facility.
- **Web site:** Images and information on collection artifacts and current and past exhibitions are accessed through the collection website (<http://www.hecol.museums.ualberta.ca/>).
- **Volunteer opportunities:** Human Ecology Students and community members volunteer with the collection, undertaking such activities as:
 - Cataloguing
 - Conservation and storage activities
 - Digital photography
 - Database organization
 - Installation of exhibitions
 - Guidance of public tours of the facilities
- **Intern opportunities:** The collection periodically accepts interns, with a priority given to University of Alberta students.

Groups that access collection-related programs and activities include:

- Edmonton and District Quilters Guild
- Edmonton Art Gallery (summer camp)
- Edmonton Public Schools
- Government House Foundation
- Human Ecology Alumni
- Marvel College
- Multicultural Heritage Centre



- The Muse Project (curriculum-linked, educational outreach program for grades 4-9 organized by the University of Alberta Museums and Collections Services)
- Olds College
- Ukrainian Canadian Museum and Archives of Alberta
- U of A Alumni group
- Women's Faculty Club members

B. STRATEGY AND CRITERIA FOR NEW ACQUISITIONS

1. Identify the types of new acquisitions that are essential to support the current and proposed programs identified above.

Though every object offered to the collection will be considered, only about 3% of offered objects are accepted each year. Constraints on storage space, staff time, and other resources necessitate that all acquisitions be carefully considered to ensure artifacts fit the collection's mission, add to its holding and have a use in the classroom and for research. Objects will be acquired via donation and purchase.

- **Artifact Donated to the Collection:** if an artifact that is offered as a gift to the collection is recommended for acquisition, the work and funds needed to transport, receive, stabilize, research, catalogue, photograph, appraise, enter data regarding the artifact, store the piece according to the highest museum standards and mount the piece for potential display must be assessed. If this is considered to be extensive, the Collection Management Committee might not recommend acquisition unless the donor is willing to help in this endeavor.
- **Artifact Purchased for the Collection:** in the current state of affairs, the purchasing of artifacts will not be encouraged and, if exceptions are to be made, the Collection Management Committee will assess the likelihood that such pieces may be donated in the near future.

Broad Theme/Topic/Area of Collecting:

- **High fashion items**, including clothing and accessories, for women, men and children from the 18th century to the present.
- **Ready-to-wear/ready-made:** clothing and accessories for women, men and children; with emphasis on (Western) Canadian designers

Priority Collecting Areas:

- Jewelry and accessories
 - Women's 18th c. pockets, stomachers and calash
 - Women's hats before the 1940s (excluding sunbonnets)
 - Women's and men's shoes prior to the 1950s
 - Eyewear (incomplete assortment presently held)
 - Men's watch fobs



- Regional cowboy hats
 - Regional rodeo belt buckles
- Lounge wear and underwear: 18th to 21st century
 - Banyans
 - Dressing gowns
 - Smoking jackets
 - Pre-1910 corsetry and support garments (excluding chemises and drawers)
- Every-day attire
 - Pre-1850 garments
 - Women's 18th and 19th century quilted petticoats
 - 1990s documented pop-culture attire and grunge wear
- Outerwear
 - Spencer jacket
 - Pre-1850 garments
- Active sportswear of the 1980s-1990s
 - Neon-colored clothing and accessories

- **Ethnic/Ethnographic:** clothing, accessories and textiles from around the world.

- Priority Collecting areas:
- Clothing, accessories and textiles from Mennonite/Hutterite or other ethnic groups established in Western Canada.

- **Material culture objects** that document things used every day related to either clothing or textiles.

- **Fabric and Fibre Technology**

- Priority Collecting Areas:
- Pre-1800, especially early chintz and toile de Jouy
 - Sustainable design, smart textiles, etc.
 - Textiles made from early man-made fibres, including rayon, acetate and regenerated proteins.

- **Tools and equipment** used in the design, manufacture or decoration of clothing or textiles/ artifacts that depict clothing and relate to the production and embellishment of cloth e.g. looms, spindles, needlework tools, patterns, historical fashion magazines and photographs.

- Priority Collecting Areas:
- Small-size hand-cranked sewing machines from before the 1920s.

- **Paper-Based Documentation**



Priority Collecting Areas:

- Fashion plates/photographs pre-1900
- Fashion periodicals pre-1939
- Patterns pre-1900 (especially from periodicals)

2. List any existing collecting area that will no longer be supplemented

Artifact that are extremely well represented in the collection include:

- Quilts: the Rosenberg Quilt Collection provides extensive representation of quilts http://collections.museums.ualberta.ca/cltx/search.aspx?type=items&featured_collection=22 Rare or exceptional pieces, currently not represented in the collection, will be considered.
- Sewing machines and industrial machines: only small-size hand-cranked sewing machines from before the 1920s will be considered.

3. List any additional requirements unique to the Collection that would affect a decision to acquire

The Clothing and Textiles Collection is committed to maintaining the highest museum standards. Over the next five years, the acquisition of artifacts will be curtailed so that the work of staff members can be directed towards serving its public rather than spending a large portion of their time receiving, stabilizing, researching, cataloguing, appraising, photographing, storing and entering data regarding new artifacts.

If a donation offer fits the collection priority areas stated above it will be recommended to the Collection Management Committee for consideration. The committee is made up of staff knowledgeable in both the scope of the collection as well as the conservation issues associated with artifact care, as per the committee's terms of reference.

Priority will be given to objects that:

- **fit acquisition strategy priority collecting areas**
- **will be used in teaching and/or research in the next five years**: a clear need must be established for an artifact by a specific instructor or faculty member in their research program or in a specific class in the next five years.
- **have clear provenance (known origin of the artifact)**: priority will be given to objects of known provenance.
- **have supporting documents**: priority will be given to objects with supporting documents such as photographs, bills of sales, supporting advertisements etc.
- **are specific to human ecology**: Other Departments and Institutes on campus also collect clothing and textile artifacts. If the artifacts fits better into the East Asian Studies, Ukrainian Folklore Collection, Anthropology/Ethnology, Art and Museums and Collections Services and can be borrowed from the, it should be offered to those collections.



- **are in good condition:** due to lack of conservation staff, priority will be given to artifacts in near perfect condition. Exceptions can be made for archeological textiles and offers accompanied by funds for conservation treatment.
- **have easily-accommodated storage requirements:** due to limited storage space, artifacts that occupy too much space or require extensive and elaborate support for storage and display will not be recommended for acquisition.
- **have minimal appraisal costs:** due to limited budget, artifacts, or groups of artifacts, that require the hiring of a professional appraiser will , the Collection Management Committee should not recommend acquisition unless the donor agrees to fund this endeavor.

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For general University of Alberta Museums information please contact:

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TO ADDRESS WHEN AN ARTIFACT IS OFFERED		
Preamble (if the answer is negative, acquisition is not advised)	NEGATIVE	AFFIRMATIVE
1. Is the artifact listed in our broad theme/topic/area of collecting?		
2. Is the artifact unrepresented in the collection? (i.e. Does a similar artifact exist offering common characteristics for the purpose of inclusion in the courses listed?)		
Main Issues	NEGATIVE	AFFIRMATIVE
1. Is the artifact listed as lacking in the collection?		
2. Are there no other artifacts that can be used for the same teaching and research purpose? (Using classes currently taught and research topics listed in faculty research section).		
3. Will the artifact be used for teaching within the next five years? Which class? _____		
4. Is the artifact an essential part of a faculty member's research? Whose research? _____		
5. Is the artifact in near perfect condition or , if not, is the donor willing to fund its conservation?		
6. Can the artifact be easily accommodated in existing storage? (i.e. Is the size excessive; will a three-dimensional support be needed?)		
7. If the services of a professional appraiser are required, is the donor willing to fund this endeavor?		
8. Does this donation cause unusual or excessive work to the staff?		
9. If this is a purchase, is it unlikely that such an object may be donated in the future?		
10. Is the provenance known?		
11. Does the artifact have supporting documentation?		
12. Is the artifact specific to more than one of the topics covered in the field of Human Ecology? (i.e. clothing, family, home and community)		
13. Is the Clothing and Textiles Collection the appropriate collection within the University to collect this artifact?		
14. Would another University collection prevent access to a similar artifact for class use, research or exhibition?		



Approved by Unit/Department/Faculty

Anne Bissonnette
Designated Curator (Print Name)

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(Signature)

Deanna Williamson
Chair/Dean/Director (Print Name)

[Signature]
(Signature)

November 20, 2011
Date Completed

Approved by Museums and Collections Services

[Signature]
Janine Andrews, Executive Director

Dec 15, 2011
Date

Approved by U of A Museums Policy and Planning Committee

Heather Proctor
Chair, Policy and Planning Committee (Print Name)

[Signature]
Signature

8 Dec 2011
Date of Committee Meeting

DECEMBER 2016
Date of Next Review

