

International Symposium at Reutlingen University, Germany, 14 - 15 November 2019

## Historical Fabrics in a Digital World: Textile Collections of Reutlingen University

### Call for Papers - Deadline: April 30, 2019

This international symposium will examine the past, present, and future of historical collections of textiles in European collections. While the papers will cover themes relevant to a wide range of textile collections across the continent, a special focus of the symposium will be on the collections of the Reutlingen University. The Reutlingen collection has been the subject of scholarly research over the last years and this symposium aims to publicize the collection, discuss the results of the surveys, and to create connections to other collections and other specialists working in the fields of western, Japanese, and pre-Columbian textile collections.

In 1848 King Wilhelm I of Wuerttemberg (1781-1864) founded the Central Office for Commerce and Trade, a forerunner of the present-day Ministry of Economic Affairs. The chair of this beneficial institution was assigned to Ferdinand von Steinbeis (1807-1893), who founded technical vocational schools and technical colleges, as well as apprentice training programs. In 1855, as a result of the crisis in the Wuerttembergian textile industry, the Reutlingen Weaving School was founded upon the initiative of Steinbeis. This institution eventually gave birth to Reutlingen University. In Stuttgart, Württemberg's capital, the Landesgewerbemuseum assembled a rich collection of textile samples; a permanent exhibition displayed fabrics as well as tools and machinery from Europe and overseas in a permanent exhibition. The collections were used intensively as can be seen in the fact that the museum counted one million visitors and 20,000 borrowers between 1853 and 1873. In the 20th century, however, the Landesmuseum gradually lost its importance and the institution was eventually closed. A substantial part of its textile holdings was handed over to the Reutlingen School.

Comprehensive collections of patterns and textile fabrics were established and expanded in many places around the end of the 19th century; the Reutlingen collection presently numbers over 500,000 patterns and textile fabrics that shaped European weaving in the 19th century. Built between the years 1890 through 1935, the collection depicts a rich, yet unexplored source for research in fashion trends for European clothing of the 19th century.

One highlight of the Reutlingen textile collection is the approximately 900 Japanese fabric fragments collected in Japan during the 1870s by a German doctor, Erwin von Baelz (1849-1913). Another highlight is the rich collection of ancient Pre-Columbian textiles stemming partly from the 8th century.

The panels in the symposium will discuss the highpoints of the Reutlingen collections (European, Japanese and Pre-Columbian) in the context of 19th and early 20th century textile collecting, and will discuss future directions of historical textile collections, in Reutlingen, as well as in other locations.

The symposium committee invites proposals for the five panels of the symposium *Historical Fabrics in a Digital World: Textile Collections of Reutlingen University*.

- Panel 1: Structuring Fabric Collections
- Panel 2: Analyzing Textile Samples
- Panel 3: European Textile Collections
- Panel 4: Japanese Textile Collections
- Panel 5: Pre-Columbian Textile Collections

## GENERAL AND PRACTICAL INFORMATION

We invite proposals for 20-minute papers that will be followed by 10-minute discussions. Please submit a 300-word (2,500 characters incl. blanks) abstract, a short bio (max. 100 words/800 characters) and a CV as a single PDF file and send it to:

[td.textil-symposium@reutlingen-university.de](mailto:td.textil-symposium@reutlingen-university.de)

Please note that your abstract needs to have a concise title, since it will be featured in the conference program and on social media.

If you have further documents that you wish to attach to your proposal (references, list of publications, institutional affiliation etc.), we kindly ask that you combine them to the proposal, bio and CV and send everything in a single PDF.

**Deadline for submissions: April 30, 2019**

**Notification of acceptance: May 15, 2019**

The symposium organizers will cover economy travel and hotel costs.

For any further information on the application procedure please contact Regine Lechler-Fiola or Bettine Seng:

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For all information on the symposium visit our website:

<https://www.td.reutlingen-university.de/forschung-industrie/textilsymposium-2019/>

The symposium is organized by:

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