

Texts and Textiles

abstracts

Sophie Aymes-Stokes (Bourgogne): 'Illustration, wood-engraving and the textual fabric'

The aim of this paper is to examine the tension between two aspects of wood-engraved illustration at the turn of the 20th century: illustrative wood-prints were seen as part of the textual fabric, or alternatively they could be considered as surfaces engraved with incised traces. My contention is that a shift in paradigmatic conceptions of text and illustration occurred with the revival of autographic wood-engraving in the early-20th century private press movement, displacing the prevailing concept of illustration as visual embroidery onto the textual fabric. The latter was the legacy of Arts & Crafts illustration, with its emphasis on transferable decorative design which could be used for wood-prints as well as for embroidery or fabric, as shown in the works produced by the Kelmescott Press or the Birmingham School for instance. / Jerome McGann in *The Visible Language of Modernism* has underlined the importance of the evolution of papermaking in the late 19th century, and he has shown that rag paper was still used for fine printing as an early modernist commitment to foreground materiality, when most commercial presses has switched to wood pulp. It's worth adding that from the moment when new photographic processes spelled the demise of reproductive wood-engraving, and autographic wood-prints acquired their artistic autonomy, the focus of these artists lay more on the medium of wood as a hard surface comparable to stone, than on the printed page as metaphoric textile. / Therefore this paper will address the complementary genealogy of visual signs as threads, embroidered lines or as incised traces. It will look more particularly at the textile imagery during this transitional period, in illustrations that were actual wood-prints or pen and ink drawings that looked like wood-prints, and it will concentrate on the work of artists such as Henry Justice Ford, Laurence and Clemence Housman, Bernard Sleight and Edmund J. Sullivan.

Athena Bellas (Melbourne): 'Twilight, texture, tactility: teen film's sensuous pleasures'

In her work on fabric and texture in the cinema, Giuliana Bruno argues that the screen 'is fabricated as a canvas of interlaced textures and layered as an interwoven surface, ultimately becoming a screen of pliable materials.' Turning my attention to these tactile material textures – a 'fibrous form of visual analysis' – I uncover the emotional, erotic, and affective power that the fold of fabric releases on the teen screen. This is a timely and compelling inquiry, for very little academic work exists that prioritises the textural surface of the teen screen as a locus of meaning and affective power. This paper investigates the affective significance of the haptic imagery of quilts and bedding materials in the teen film *Twilight*. In this film, the teen girl heroine brings her vampire lover into her bedroom, and it is here that she expresses and acts upon her desire. Romance and eroticism is woven across the textural surface of the screen, the lush drapes of the teen girl's bedding fabric. The mobile camera haptically brushes up against these fibres, inviting the viewer to caress the textured surface too. Such tactile reciprocity between teen screen and teen viewer not only activates the voluptuous appeal of the fibrous surface, it also creates an intimate affective encounter with the scene of teen girl desire. Furthermore, the marketing of the fan object 'Bella bedding' – a bedding set that replicates the exact design seen in the film – extends this tactile engagement even further: the bedding as fan collectable is tangible, caressable. The teen girl bedroom exists in a reciprocal relationship with the on-screen scene of romance, passed on in the form of fabric: an extended narrative 'thread'.

Georgios Boudalis (Museum of Byzantine Culture, Thessaloniki), 'From fabric to bookbinding: the technological background of the codex structure'

One of the major technological inventions of Late Antiquity, the codex, appears when most of the individual technologies involved for its making were already well established for centuries. The Byzantine codex structure is a direct descendant of the earliest codex structures and until the seventeenth century preserved most of its structural features unchanged. This fact combined with the relative large number of such codices preserved makes it possible to study them in detail and consider them as reflecting the earliest codex structures. / The study of this bookbinding tradition has been the field of specific in-depth research in recent years. Drawing mostly from the technological features of such codices but also from etymological sources this paper aims to stress the close relations of the complex structure of the codex – mostly the sewing of the gatherings and their

connection with the boards - with the techniques employed in basketry, mat and textile weaving, all of which were already almost fully developed when the codex first appeared. Etymological sources in the Greek language – a language closely connected with the advance and establishment of Christianity – will be also considered, as the very word for bookbinding in Greek (*stachosis*) means to bind together reeds.

Patricia Pires Boulhosa (Cambridge), 'The survival of an Icelandic manuscript as a sewing pattern'

This paper tells the story of four leaves from a medieval Icelandic manuscript (AM 122 b fol), originally filled with narratives of the lives of thirteenth-century Icelanders, but cut up in the seventeenth century to make patterns for clothes. The scattered leaves of the manuscript were gathered in the early eighteenth century by Árni Magnússon, born in 1663, a figure almost single-handedly responsible for the preservation of most extant Icelandic mediaeval manuscripts. It had been taken apart in approximately 1677 by its owner, Gísli Jónsson, who had lent it (undamaged) to Árni Guðmundsson, but received it back with many leaves falling from their binding. Gísli seems then to have decided that the manuscript's life as a book should come to an end: he started re-using the leaves to make book-covers and knife-sheaths, as well as giving away some of the loose leaves. Some twenty years later, Árni Magnússon recovered about thirty leaves from the manuscript, including those four which had been used to make patterns for clothes. / This paper will discuss the history of the men and women close to the manuscript, what these leaves have to say about the manufacture of clothes in seventeenth-century Iceland, and also their transformation from book, to textile pattern, and back into book again

Joy Boutrup (Kolding School of Design), 'Seventeenth-century Letter Braids'

Several English manuscripts from the seventeenth century contain instructions for loop braiding. Included in seven of them are instructions for the braiding of letters, called Letter Braids. The instructions were enigmatic until a growing general knowledge of loop braiding made it possible to decipher them. / Letter braids are two-layered braids worked with loops by two persons. The layers have different colours and the swapping of threads from one layer to another makes it possible to create letter shapes in a contrasting colour on the braid. There are three different types of instructions using different notations, numbers of loops and resulting in letters with different shapes. In two of the documents are suggestions for texts for the braids. These texts consist in general of two rhymed sentences. To judge from these texts the letter braids were intended as love tokens; only one of the texts has a more political than personal content. / Only a few contemporary objects with letter braids have been located until this date. Among them are two magnificent multiple-strand bookmarks both with religious texts on the strands. One has eleven strands with English quotations and one with quotations in Latin on thirteen strands. There is further located one carrying strap on a purse and a cane string with braided text.

Jennifer Burek Pierce (Iowa), 'What we talk about when we talk about knitting: Blogs and Convergence Culture'

What does a knitting blog produce? In the case of a prominent blog like Yarn Harlot, authored by Stephanie Pearl-McPhee of Canada, it generates both text and textiles. The Yarn Harlot blog features often humorous accounts of life and knitting, and when Pearl-McPhee discusses her use of another designer's pattern for a project, there is a corresponding uptick in attention to the pattern in the user-maintained knitting database called Ravelry. Beyond the numbers of knitters who take on a project which Pearl-McPhee has completed or ask for a pattern she has created, her blog posts also generate prolific comments and Tweets that tend to offer supportive, even endearing remarks, which Pearl-McPhee in turn acknowledges in her thoughts on blogging and knitting. The Yarn Harlot blog therefore seems to be an example of what Henry Jenkins calls convergence culture and what Ted Striphas terms intermediation, a series of interactions in which texts and media generate new texts and spin-offs in other media formats. In this case, the new texts may be the textiles which knitters are inspired to create by the blog, YouTube videos at knitting conferences, and contributions to Doctors Without Borders via Pearl-McPhee's collective Tricoteuses sans Frontières. The blog, therefore, is a series of interactions that can be interpreted further with reference to McLuhan's ideas about global communication, theoretical constructs that account for sentiment as a political force, and studies of influence. Not simply a media phenomenon or an instance of fan culture, the Yarn Harlot blog is a site of connection that fosters relationships and affectionate attachment within an international knitting community who craft words and garments across national borders. Some of these properties can also be seen on other knitting blogs including Shetland Trader in the U.K. and Brooklyn Tweed in the U.S. In these outlets, talking about knitting means talking about a great number of subjects in ways that foster bonds among members of an international craft community.

Christopher Burlinson (Cambridge), 'Finest Gossamore'

This paper works outwards from a pair of poems by Robert Herrick, adjacent in *Hesperides* (1648), 'To the Little Spinners' and 'Oberon's Palace' - in particular from an isolated reference in the latter of the two to "two blankets ore-/ Cast of the finest Gossamore". These two lines are part of a system of textile metaphor, in which Herrick repeatedly uses spinning and weaving (and spun and woven fabrics) to stand in for poetic language, for its artifice, its beauty, and for its sheer insubstantiality. 'Oberon's Palace' itself is preoccupied with linguistic compounds, hyphens, and joinings, at the same time as advertising its own self-undoing insubstantiality, and part of the aim of this paper will be to think about this particular, and remarkably sustained and varied, use of textiles as metaphors for texts, as well as objects within them. / Gossamer, though, is a particularly unusual figure, and an unusual textile -- a substance on the brink of sheer insubstantiality, a fabric of mysterious origins, neither simple thread nor cloth, neither exactly woven nor spun. And the word itself emerges as particularly fleeting, rare and obscure in the seventeenth century, shifting in its spelling and mysterious in its etymology. What can we learn, not just by placing the metaphor of gossamer at the centre of Herrick's poetic and imaginative project, but by thinking about the early modern poetics of gossamer itself?

Claire Canavan (York), 'How to judge a book by its cover: text and textile in an early modern embroidered bookbinding'

Although embroidered bookbindings commonly feature amongst those artefacts produced by early modern domestic needlewomen, the forms of cultural and aesthetic agency generated by such covers remain largely neglected. This paper will bring one seventeenth-century binding, depicting Abraham banishing Hagar and Ishmael, into dialogue with a range of texts including sewing manuals, women's life-writing, prose fictions and poetry. I will demonstrate how the bookbinding shaped and refined the way that the Bible and Psalms it encased were experienced. Functioning as a prefatory paratextile, the cover was designed to excite interest in a text that it held in dialogue with cloth-filled domestic surroundings and to establish the interpretative framework within which the book was considered. The cover, however, simultaneously told its own visual and tactile narrative which operated in synthesis with the religious instruction delivered by its contents. Consideration of a hitherto unexamined series of poems by John Cleveland demonstrates contemporary sensitivity to the textile origins of textual terms and reveals the extent to which these forms of cultural expression were regarded as conceptually comparable and pedagogically complementary. Consequently, even purely pictorial embroidery could inculcate not just textile but diverse textual and even musical literacies which advanced the skills of everyone from the unlettered to the exegete. Building upon women's domestic and devotional responsibilities, stitchery thus allowed women to position themselves as key agents in the scriptural experiences of themselves and others, and placed them at the centre of religious, textual and household practices.

Angela Carr (Montreal), 'Gathering materials: from altar-cloth to text in writing of Gloria Anzaldúa'

As Chicana writer and critic Gloria Anzaldúa was completing her seminal collection, *Borderlands/La Frontera*, she wrote, "In looking at this book that I'm almost finished writing, I see a mosaic pattern (Aztec-like) emerging, a weaving pattern, thin, here, thick there. I see a preoccupation with the deep structure, the underlying structure..." Notably, here, Anzaldúa's reference to weaving refers not to textiles but rather to the weaving patterns brought from textiles to tiles, thread to stone, in the intricate mosaic works embedded in Aztec architecture. In this, Anzaldúa's description of her writing process, a curious relationship between texts, textiles and objects is foregrounded. Both textiles and objects were an integral part of Anzaldúa's writing practice, as the Gloria Anzaldúa Altares (altar objects) collection at the Archives and Special Collections Library at UC Santa Cruz shows. This paper will investigate the relationship between texts, textiles and material objects through a close reading of the writer's altar objects collection, which houses an eclectic array of objects ranging from altar cloths to goddess tapestries to flags and feathered serpents.

Benjamin Cartwright (Cambridge), 'Delight in Disorder: "Singing Along To The Song of the Loom"'

This paper will focus on making, and what it is to make. It has long been argued that clothing can be read as text, but what if clothing functions as song? –a song built in the bodily rhythm of weaver and loom, and enacted on the wearer as they negotiate the 'lyric' structure of the cloth. What is the influence of this rhythm, tied as it is, to intricate lines of social narrative, on weaver and wearer, and its relationship to the disordering inherent in 'wearing'? / In general production is under-theorised. Using the examples of the warp-weighted loom and Island identity in Viking Age Atlantic Scotland, and the Berber carpet weavers of Southern Morocco, I will investigate this act of 'world weaving', both intangible and material—how social narratives (often recorded in song—for example, the highly emotive waulking songs of Highland and Island Scotland) and understandings are re-created

in the moments when practice blurs explicit and embodied action, and in turn, how this 'rhythmic' structure, moved beyond the presence of the loom to shape the lives, daily motions, and agency of the wearers.

Megan Cavell (Toronto), 'Craft-work: textile metaphors and the materiality of language in Old English poetry'

According to Old English poetry, human experience is intimately linked to the material world of objects and object-production. Because of this, it is unsurprising that Anglo-Saxon poetry, like that of so many other languages and cultures, makes use of textile metaphors when exploring issues of language, intellectual inquiry and poetic composition. Through the construction-imagery of weaving, braiding, locking and binding, Old English poetic texts demonstrate a complex approach to both oral and written language, each of which is ultimately represented through concrete and material terms. / This paper will explore the use of textile and related construction metaphors that are applied to language and knowledge across several different poetic texts, including *Andreas*, *Beowulf*, *Elene* and *Genesis A*. In doing so, I will argue not only that Old English poetry represents a material vision of language – one in which the Anglo-Saxon obsession with human skill and crafted objects is mapped onto the world of words – but also that this vision is marked by a duality also present in images of craftsmanship. This duality is evident at the lexicographical level, with the Old English noun, *craft*, possessing a range of definitions from the positive 'skill', 'art', 'talent' and 'artifact' to the negative 'trick', 'fraud' and 'deceit'. It is upon the nexus between high praise and pointed skepticism toward the skill of the craftsman that this paper will focus, as it probes the metaphors that associate the weaving of prestige objects with the weaving of wickedness.

Maria Damon (Minnesota), 'Slow poetry and the needle arts: a qualified critique'

The "slow poetry" movement and the current knitting/handiwork renaissance, like the "slow food" movement, appear to embody a shared resistance to the commoditized world of fast food, instant messaging and other assaults on temporalities imagined to be more in tune with organic processes and natural processes. However, both of these are founded on a suspicious nostalgia for, on the one hand, expressive lyricism associated with the rise of bourgeois subjectivity, and on the other hand, the domestic genteel servitude "enjoyed" by middle-class ladies post-Industrial revolution (when handiwork was no longer necessary and so became a leisure pursuit). I want to offer not so much a critique of these practices themselves, but of exaggerated claims that these are practices of resistance. I do, however, valorize aspects of both practices and hope to address this as well, especially through an analysis of how my own preferred practices, weaving and cross-stitching, are more similar to than different from rapid and commodified forms of communication like email, Facebook and other electronic socializing media.

Kandy Diamond (Manchester), 'dec.ode—the language of knitting'

This research focuses on the language used to communicate information in a knitting pattern. The abbreviations and numbers that make up a pattern are like a new language that needs to be learnt. The effectiveness of this method as well as the evolution of the format and language, deviations from this, and the future of the knitting pattern are all subjects of this investigation. / The knitting pattern is a combination of image, code and abbreviations; it has existed in this format for many years and there has been little deviation from the classic format over this time. Patterns from the past 100 years have been studied along with alternative instructional knitting texts and handbooks created to help the potential knitter decipher the instructions for *that* jumper they so desperately want to knit. / Knitting is a practical activity, usually taught by one-to-one tuition; when the techniques has been grasped the lone knitter moves on to the pattern where tuition consists of brief instructions and much assumption of prior knowledge. With the arrival of new technologies in recent years, the knitter has many more resources at their fingertips in the form of YouTube videos, forums and apps. But will new technologies ever affect the established language of the knitting pattern?

Giovanni Fanfani and Ellen Harlizius-Klück (Copenhagen), 'Weaving hymns: textile metaphors and the poetics of ancient Greek epics and lyric'

The terminology and imagery of archaic Greek poetics is shaped by a pervasive presence of textile metaphors. A reconsideration of the etymology and technical meaning of the poetic lexicon for song performance and composition in Greek epics and lyric will shed new light on the structural role played by textile crafts (weaving, plaiting, sewing, spinning) in defining the essence of a poem. / Terms like *humnos* ('hymn'), *prooimion* ('proem'), *oime* (etymologically 'thread', and then metaphorically 'song') *poikilia* ('pattern weaving' and hence 'variety'), *rhapsoidos* (lit. 'he who sews together the songs') reflect a technical textile background at the root of the idea of poetry-making. / A particular aspect of this ontological connection is the preoccupation with

authoritative (often divinely sanctioned) beginning (Greek *arkhe*), which Greek epics seems to express with the word *humnos* ('hymn') in its technical sense: a wider analogy is thus implied between the starting border of a fabric woven in a warp-weighted loom (i.e. the heading band), and the Greek concept of *humnos*. Both provide a starting edge and a continuity to the fabric, be that material (textile) or metaphorical (poem/song). The etymology and technical use of the word *prooimion* reveal nonetheless an apparent textile background: stemming from *oime* ('song' and 'thread'), *prooimion* is literally the 'front' or 'starting end' of the song. / We propose to investigate this topic from a double perspective, literary and technical/logical, in two separate but linked papers. Through a few samples from Homer, Homeric Hymns, Pindar and Bacchylides, Giovanni Fanfani's paper aims at illustrating the structural analogy between text and textile, which archaic Greek poetics has handed down to Western literature. Ellen Harlizius-Klück will deal with several issues of textile technology posed by the written texts, with a focus on iconography and on textile structures as shaping Greek thought on a philosophical and logical ground.

Marianna Franzosi (independent scholar), 'Textiles as texts: Ancient Andean textiles and Anni Albers' artistic analysis'

There are several links between text and textile and in many cases the latter has functioned as support for writing. Nevertheless, textile can go further and become a meaningful text of its own, conveying specific semantic content, as in Andean pre-Columbian weaving. Several anthropological studies have focused on the importance of textiles for Inca communities in providing cultural information through a logographic writing system woven into textiles in geometrical square units, variously articulated, called *tocapu*. / The textual character of Andean textiles is highlighted when, absent the possibility of reading the specific content embodied into *tocapu* signs, the medium and the visual structures of that form of communication come to the foreground. In this context, the critical analysis of the work of the contemporary Bauhaus artist Anni Albers, who devoted her artistic research mainly to textiles influenced deeply by Andean weaving, becomes a tool for verifying the semantic value of Inca textiles. It highlights how the artist, in identifying and reconstructing the units of the text's articulation, succeeded in shifting value from meaning to the forms in which it is expressed and perceived, eventually demonstrating the communicative power of Andean weaving outside the cultural circuit that originally made them comprehensible. / Andean textiles become a privileged cultural reference for Albers because they are the products of a community in which communication, art, form and functions were still effectively integrated. Both Inca textiles and Albers tapestries can be seen as texts, whose appeal lies in their ambiguous position between the intellectual value of the informational vehicle and the aesthetic aspects of the medium.

Georgina Gajewski (North Carolina at Chapel Hill), 'Private schools as public spaces: exhibitions of needlework in female academies of the American South'

This paper examines the yearly exhibitions of student work at private academies in North Carolina in the first half of the nineteenth century. These exhibitions included both recitations by students and galleries of student work, which, for female students, included examples of needlework over which they had labored for several months. Decorative needlework has often been interpreted as visual representation of its period's ideally feminine characteristics. By the nineteenth century, indeed, needlework and femininity had become inextricably intertwined. / These exhibits provided incentives for student achievement, but at the same time served as marketing tools for trustees interested in the schools' financial success. In so doing, trustees appropriated the accomplishments of students and (female) teachers as their own, further denying the work and creative aspects of needlework by representing the school as an environment conducive to the "natural expression" of the female tendency for needlework. / In particular, this paper examines a painted and embroidered landscape completed by Mary J. Walker at Raleigh Academy in Raleigh, North Carolina, in 1826. This information is uncharacteristically inscribed with black printer's type of the sort used by newspaper printers. This and other visual elements of the landscape suggest that trustees had significant influence over not only the context in which student work was displayed, but also the content. Though contemporaries often viewed such needlework as a reflection of the skill and character of the needlework, a closer examination of the circumstances under which it was produced suggests multiple influences in addition to ideals of femininity.

Sally Holloway (Royal Holloway), 'Textile Transformations: Women's Creation of Courtship and Birth Tokens, 1680-1850'

While historians such as Diana O'Hara, David Cressy and Ginger Frost have recognised the importance of men's gift-giving in negotiating the path to matrimony, gifts given by women have been relegated to their shadow. Tokens created by women therefore remain largely unrecognised as unique expressions of the female self. This paper analyses how women expressed emotion and identity through material culture during two

pivotal moments in the life-cycle; courtship and the birth of a child. It begins by analysing the significance of handmade courtship gifts such as waistcoats, handkerchiefs and neckcloths. The creation of these items represented *time* invested in a man, personifying the spirit of the giver and demonstrating women's virtue and domestic accomplishment. They also enabled women to metaphorically and publicly claim men through their dress. / Similar rituals were undertaken by women preparing for the birth of a child, purchasing childbed linen, caps and gowns for their infants while creating emotionally-invested gifts such as pincushions and quilts to celebrate their entry into the world. In parallel to women's creation of textile gifts for suitors, mothers leaving infants at the Foundling Hospital in London hemmed their blankets in coloured wools, acting as an embodiment of their affection for a child. The transformation of these textiles provided a tangible way of marking particular stages in the life-cycle, and a materialisation of romantic and maternal love. This paper engages with histories of gender, material culture, gift-giving and the life-cycle in order to understand the agency of these objects in greater detail.

Lindsey Holmes (artist), 'The needle is always at hand'

I propose to speak on my work as costume-based artist in partnership with Keats House and archives. *The needle is always at hand* exhibition, held at Keats House in the summer of 2011, explored the life of Fanny Brawne and her relationship with John Keats, through costume-based artwork developed from texts in the Keats archive. These artworks blurred the line between texts and textiles, with text printed on dress linings, items of dress made from paper, text engraved in shoes and stitched to furniture around the house. / The success of this project has led to a further collaboration, an exhibition planned for the summer of 2013 entitled *The Fashion of John Keats Life and Death*, which will explore the medical aspect of Keats' life. Keats trained as a doctor and died from tuberculosis. This will again be approached through the texts left behind, including Keats' medical study notes, and explored through items of men's and medical dress from the period. / My work is designed to be touched, handled and even tried on; each piece invites the audience to explore further to uncover their multi-layered narrative. The more the audience engages, the more they will discover. For me reading is as much a sensory experience as the handling or wearing of dress and this element of text is explored through my work.

Sara Impey (artist), 'Text and textile: a maker's viewpoint'

For the last decade my quilts have contained stitched lettering. I use the materiality of text and textile in an explicit way, covering the surface with words which are intended to be legible, but which are also integral to the design. I comment on social issues – for example domestic and street violence, the so-called 'checkbox culture' and environmental degradation. I often experiment with wordplay to reinforce my point: for example, stitching a 'mesostic', in which a vertical sentence interlocks with the text on a grid. / I also express more personal themes: I reworked the verse on a sampler stitched by my great-great grandmother and added all the names in my family connecting us down the generations. The quilt 'Punctuation' which has been acquired by the Victoria & Albert Museum, was inspired by a love letter to my mother. / The sheer time and skill involved in stitching text traditionally load it with meaning and it has often been used as a record. Some of my quilts subvert this. I painstakingly stitched a trivial internet blog and a list of conversation fillers - the phatic communion that is usually left out of formal written language. With the content all but meaningless, attention is drawn to the process, the decorative surface and the dialogue with the materials.

Ralph Isaacs (independent scholar), 'Sazigyo--Burmese text-woven manuscript binding tapes'

This paper describes the woven text, geometrical motifs and pictorial images on Burmese manuscript binding tapes. The sazigyo is both text and textile, cord and record. Tablet-woven in silk or cotton, it starts with a loop and ends with a cord. These form a tie when the sazigyo is wound round the palm-leaf manuscript in its cloth sleeve. The text on the flat area between loop and cord names the donors who aspire to gain merit by donating the manuscript to a monastery. The sazigyo weaver may date her work and sign it. She may even name her price. / Non-verbal devices enhance the meaning of the woven text. Simple geometric motifs arranged in threes acquire symbolic significance: they symbolise a text, an idea, and a system of morality, the Three Gems—Buddha, Dhamma (Law) and Sangha, the community of monks. Motifs composed of nine elements are the ancient *navratna* 'nine auspicious gems' standing for the Nine Planets and their powerful influences. / Pictorial images are loaded symbols. The Buddha is never depicted as a person, but represented by a Bo-tree, empty throne, parasol, or stupa. The stag symbolises the Dhamma, the horse the Sangha. Symbols of generosity, *dana*, abound. They include *padaythabin* (trees of plenty), offertory vessels *hsun-ok* and *kalat*, and the miniature chariots used to carry gold-leaf to the gilders at work regilding a pagoda. The Earth Goddess Vasundhara is invoked to witness the donors' deed of merit. Nats and Thagya Min (Indra) reflect the complex Burmese system of beliefs.

Allison Jai O'Dell (Corcoran College), 'The description and categorization of sewing structures in historical bindings with textile terminology'

The theories, aims, and constructs of analytical bibliography – a discipline most apt to enumerate the manifestations and elements of books as physical objects – have a tendency to skew binding description towards documentation of covering material, surface design, and finishing techniques, while wholly ignoring sewing structures. Cynically speaking, the developing history of bookbinding is truly the history of book covers. There are both practical and intellectual obstacles to the bibliographic discussion of bookbinding structures: for instance, sewing patterns in Western books are most often eclipsed by their covering material, sometimes demanding a level of destruction for visual analysis where tactile investigation is not possible; those persons with the experiential knowledge necessary to accurately describe sewing structures are in the business of making books, not necessarily cataloging them; and the vocabularies for describing sewing structures in bookworks have not yet been standardized – trade and/or folk language is employed where technical terms are lacking, thus leading to confusion. / This paper will provide an exploration of precise terminology for describing sewing structures and techniques in bookbinding, by examining established language used to describe identical structures and techniques in the field of textile history. Blurring the boundaries between traditional silos of studies in material culture, viewing bookbindings within textile classifications can promote and inspire a composite approach to information organization and discovery by providing the semantic and investigative tools necessary for identification, categorization, and collocation of historic sewing structures.

Alison Knight (Cambridge), "In another make me understood": Scripture, quotations, and contexture in George Herbert's *The Temple*

In early modern England, descriptions of the Bible as a seamless, unbreakable weave abound. From Martin Luther's descriptions of the Bible as 'the garment that our Lord Christ has put on and in which he lets himself be seen and found' to William Tyndale's claims that Catholics 'rent and teare the scriptures' by abusive quotation, Protestant interpretation of scripture emphasises the internal connections and unity of the Bible. / Fundamental to Protestant hermeneutics is the 'contexture' of verses; from the Latin *con* and *texere* ["to weave together"], a verse's contexture describes its integration with surrounding and associated verses, and the ways in which other verses adjust or augment its potential for meaning. To ignore a verse's contexture (to engage in isolated or abusive quotation) violates the text, and truncates its capacity to make meaning. Critics have not noted how heavily early modern writers understand their quotation of scripture in terms of this unbreakable weave. / In particular, George Herbert's use of scripture in *The Temple* depends on the meaning of verses in their original scriptural contexts. In poems like "The Odour, 2.Cor.2." and "The Flower", Herbert activates the meaning of verses in context to correct his speakers, who demonstrate key mis-readings. By referring the reader to the original context of verses, Herbert not only undermines his own devotional authority, he also reinforces scripture's final authority on its own language, as well as the unbreakable weave between his words and those of scripture.

Kelvin Knight (UEA), "'The only true book": writing and weaving in W.G. Sebald's *The Rings of Saturn*

W.G. Sebald's penultimate work of prose fiction, *The Rings of Saturn*, has silk woven through its pages. Culminating in a lengthy discussion of the history of sericulture in the final chapter, the fabric repeatedly surfaces in the fragmentary episodes of the narrative, from the purple piece of silk in Thomas Browne's *Urn Burial* to the fishing nets of coarse Persian silk used to catch herring in Lowestoft. Sebald even compares the occupations of writer and weaver, suggesting that both professionals are prone to the bouts of melancholy that result from "the feeling that they have got hold of the wrong thread." Yet in response to the pattern books that he views in a Norwich museum, Sebald's narrator explains how the samples of silk found therein "seem to me to be leaves from the only true book which none of our textual and pictorial works can even begin to rival." Therefore, in this paper I want to address the way in which things hold together in *The Rings of Saturn*, and the way in which Sebald attempts to weave together the diverse subjects of his digressions, but can never quite emulate the materiality of the sample book. It is my opinion that the author uses this metaphor to demonstrate the discord between the integrity of the landscape that his narrator traverses, threaded together by roads, footpaths, railways, and bridges, and the highly incongruous nature of his diverse mental detours.

Leah Knight (Brock, Ontario), 'Home Economics and Ecologies: Pinning and Penning Anne Clifford's Flowers'

When Anne Clifford (1590-1676) was eulogized, remark was made upon one way in which she went about decking out her chamber: "She would frequently bring out of the rich Store-house of her memory, things new and old, Sentences, or Sayings of remark, which she had read or learned out of Authors and with these her Walls, her Bed, her Hangings, and Furniture must be adorned; causing her Servants to write them in Paper, and her Maids to pin them up, that she, or they, in time of their dressing, or as occasion served, might remember, and make their descants upon them. So that, though she had not many Books in her Chamber, yet it was dressed up with the flowers of a library." Clifford's habit was remarkable in its day and has been often later noted, primarily for its picturesque quality, but the close integration of the textual and the textile in Clifford's interior-decorating has not, to my knowledge, received close examination; when Juliet Fleming, for instance, referred to it in the context of various forms of wall-writing, it was not distinguished from Montaigne's practice of having sayings carved into the rafters of his library—a very different material and textual practice. I propose in this paper to contextualize Clifford's habit insofar as it illuminates one arena of interplay in seventeenth-century women's ways of working through pinning and penning. I am particularly interested in the practice as it might be seen to underpin Clifford's extensive reading, the subject of a larger research project I am currently undertaking.

Hester Lees-Jeffries (Cambridge), 'Shakespeare in folds'

Folding was an essential principle of construction for most early modern garments, resulting in a completely different relationship between raw material and finished garment to what we might now assume. This is most elaborately apparent in ruffs, but can be seen in many other contexts too. The folds of other textiles, especially tapestries, are also notable in early modern contexts, both practically (for example, both domestically and on the stage) and rhetorically. / This paper combines a 'thick description' account of some aspects of folds and folding in early modern textile culture, as well as a more conceptual approach (influenced, *inter alia*, by Deleuze's account of the baroque fold), with close readings of passages in *The Rape of Lucrece*, *Cymbeline*, and *Hamlet*. It suggests that a closer attention to ideas about folding might lead, for example, to a more nuanced understanding of what it means when the Ghost promises, in *Hamlet*, that he will 'a tale unfold', and that such attention might also shape how we think about how plays in particular might be constructed, performed, and understood by writers, actors, audiences, and readers.

Bridget Long (Hertfordshire), "'Patchwork is the Fashion of this Age": the eighteenth-century language of patchwork'

During his 2009 American Presidential inauguration speech Barack Obama chose to use the following 'For we know that our patchwork heritage is a strength not a weakness.... We are shaped by every language and culture, drawn from every end of this earth' confident in the knowledge that his audience would understand his meaning. He accepted that the country where the patchwork quilt is regarded as a cultural icon would appreciate the positive way he used patchwork to describe the mix of people that make up the USA. / Thomas Baker announced that patchwork was the fashion in 1706. Jonathan Swift then understood the widespread familiarity with the term and, when writing *Gulliver's Travels* (1726), knew he could describe Gulliver's clothes made by Lilliputian tailors as 'look[ing] like the Patch-Work made by the Ladies in England, only that mine were all of a colour'. / Drawing upon records of cases from the Old Bailey, probate inventories, diaries, publications and newspapers, this paper will consider the popularity of patchwork as decorative needlework in the long eighteenth-century and examine the mobility of the term in a variety of texts. Alongside the records of needlework practice, the term became associated with the feminine ideals of domestic efficiency and economy towards the end of the period. However while patchwork was seen in this positive light, it was also adopted as a negative descriptive widely used in parliamentary debates, critical texts and theoretical discourses.

Katie McGettigan (Keele), 'Tailoring the tale: the material text in Herman Melville's *Pierre*'

Herman Melville's fiction consistently draws attention to its own textual materiality. The influence of Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus* is evident in Melville's references to the shared material origins of clothing and paper in the 'loomings' and 'weaving' of *Moby-Dick*, and in *White-Jacket*: a novel named for the strange garment worn by its protagonist. But it is in *Pierre* (1852) that these reflections on the relations between textile and text are pursued most extensively. The hero, Pierre Glendinning, imagines the nightdress of his fiancée, Lucy Tartan, as a 'precious parchment', he receives letters from tailors-turned-publishers who seem unsure if they wish to purchase his 'wardrobe' or his 'works', and Pierre loses a 'paper rag' pamphlet, only for the reader to discover that it was helping to pad the lining of his jacket. / Most critics read *Pierre* as a novel in which the protagonist's failures in the literary marketplace represent Melville's own hostility towards the conditions of literary

production. My paper, however, will argue that such readings ignore Melville's sustained engagement with those conditions and the material texts they produced. Melville's ludic meditation on the relationship between paper and cloth suggests that the conditions of book production and circulation were not merely constraints upon authorial expression. Instead, Melville could appropriate aspects of the material text to make the conditions of literary production a site for the creation of meaning. Rather than wishing to divorce authorship from the commercial book-object, Melville illustrates that literary value can emerge from interactions with textual materiality.

Victoria Mitchell (Norwich), "The only true book": patterns of exchange between text and textile in catalogues of samples from eighteenth-century Norwich'

The writer W. G. Sebald described eighteenth-century 'pattern books' from Norwich as 'catalogues of samples, the pages of which seem to me to be leaves from the only true book which none of our textual and pictorial works can even begin to rival'. These books of textile samples were used both to record aspects of production and to entice buyers in the marketplace. The use of text accompanying the samples reflects these intentions, but the samples themselves might also be regarded as a non-verbal text, particularly in the case of the consumer who is learning to discriminate between, for example, varieties of multi-coloured callamancoes. / In this paper I shall consider relationships between text and textile within different types of eighteenth-century Norwich pattern book. The considerable variety of fabrics and pattern/colour combinations, together with an international trade network, resulted in elaborate differentiation in the naming of cloth and pattern types as a significant feature of Norwich textile manufacture. These names may be considered as a form of translation across national boundaries as well as demonstrating the passage from manufacture to consumer. In conclusion I will consider weave and pattern as forms of non-verbal text and reflect upon Sebald's poetic assertion.

Linda Newington (Winchester School of Art), 'From rags to riches'

The theme is broadly the stuff of books, which will be used to explore and illustrate the use of text and textiles within the framework of a selection of artists' books from the collection. The works selected will demonstrate the link between that "stuff" and the maker's intention thus linking concept to materials. The materials and constructions are those of textiles for example: calico, cotton, the dressmaking pattern, knitting and sewing, thread and yarn. The narratives and images use the materials as an integral part of the work to present the makers ideas. These may alter, subvert, reshape or surprise us with their inventiveness. It is notable that such works are a recent development so this will also be explored especially the tensions that may emerge concerning definitions of the artist's book and between art and craft. / Some antecedents for this practice will be briefly covered especially as these works provide primary sources within the broader library collection of resources for the study and practice of textiles. Two examples have been selected which are rags books and the textile books of Louise Bourgeois as both combine text and textiles.

Katya Oichermann (Goldsmiths): 'Binding auto/biographies'

Embroidery has a story to tell, the visual story of embroidered images and that of its making. This talk concentrates on German Torah binders, Jewish ceremonial textiles with a biographical element. Those artefacts are addressed as repositories for the clandestine autobiographies of their female makers, focusing on an 1836 binder from Bavaria. The talk expands on the contemporary resonance of Torah binders when they are used in relation to textile art-practices that are preoccupied with immigration, Jewish identity, femininity and cultural memory. / The investigation of the binders' histories and making, their shift from category to category and their geographical journeys, inspire the creation of new embroideries, in which hi/stories of Jewishness are staged as embodied autobiography, interplaying text and stitch. This interplay is discussed as the possibility of voicing unnoticed and marginalised hi/stories of woman. Writing/embroidering will be contextualized in relation to writings on genre by Jacques Derrida and Sarat Maharaj, feminist reflections on autobiography by Hélène Cixous and Adriana Cavarero, and contemporary writing on craft as unfixed creative territory of shifting identities and narratives (Peter Dormer, Glen Adamson, Sue Rowley). / The Torah binder is a cloth band which wraps the Torah scroll when not in use. Binders from German-speaking communities used to be produced from swaddling cloths that covered a boy during circumcision ceremony. The cloth, torn into stripes, was sewn together and embroidered with the names of the child and his father, the date of birth and a blessing - thus acting effectively as a birth certificate. Decorative elements were added according to the skills and imaginative ability of the maker - often the child's mother.

Anne Rippin (Bristol), 'Textiles and scholarship: using contemporary textile practice as a model for organizational research'

I have used textiles in my work for a number of years, and am interested in the perennial question of how art research can lead into areas of knowledge which cannot be accessed by other more conventional research methodologies, particularly in the Social Sciences. I have been particularly interested in using textiles in the first reflective stages of inquiry and at the end of a project as ways of (re)presenting research 'findings'. In this paper, however, I would like to think about research and scholarship more generally, and how textiles allow us to understand knowledge production in academic practice. / In this paper I will consider the appropriateness of textiles as a way of understanding research in my particular context, based in a school of management, into organisational phenomena. I will begin with a consideration of weaving, patching, darning and stitching as metaphors for organisational life, which I will illustrate with examples from my own textile practice and I will then go on to consider more theoretical takes on the construction of knowledge and the construction of textiles showing how the cloth models knowledge construction. I will draw on the work of Michel de Certeau and Tim Ingold, with their ideas about fragments, layers, holes and lines. Working these metaphors will offer a challenge to positivist notions of research methodology.

Deborah Rosario (Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford), 'Embroidery in Eve's bower in Milton's *Paradise Lost*'

Though the verb 'embroider' was a common verb choice in early modern descriptions of flowers, the language of design in Eve's bower in John Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Book 4, suggests more than an off-hand choice. Believing in the word's metaphorical weight draws attention to how embroidery might inform the phenomenology of the bower. More significantly, embroidery provoked argument and protestation on the themes of ornament, artifice, and women's character and work. Each case hinges on how external display was understood to relate to intrinsic worth. / Locating Eve's bower within these discourses gives us a perspective through which to interpret and measure some of the declarations on the character of women or prayer and ceremony in the epic. The attention to design and artifice, though sublimated through nature, contrasts with the following lines which value prayer and love-making set in the interior-most places, each unhindered by external aids or guises (*PL* 4.746-743). It also contrasts with Adam's conception of Eve having 'too much of ornament' (*PL* 8.538). Unlike those neat rhetorical schemes, the descriptive rhetoric of Eve's bower permits no easy categorisations.

Clemence Schultze (Durham), 'Linen leaves: early written records in ancient Rome'

Roman writers confirm the existence of inscribed linen garments and of texts of record or ritual written upon linen (*libri lintei*). Best known are the magistrate lists mentioned by Augustan historian Livy (4.20) as discovered by his first-century BCE source Licinius Macer in Juno Moneta's temple, and used by him to challenge predecessors' views of early Roman history. / Licinius' books are long lost, but a comparator survives: an Egyptian mummy in Zagreb was wrapped in bands recycled from a third-century Etruscan ritual work. The text is readable; size and construction can be inferred; ivory black was used for ink. The books which Licinius 'discovered' were probably similar in form: did he find or fake them? / As Pliny the Elder attests, linen textiles were produced throughout the Mediterranean. Linen's durability and purity (being vegetable) made it suitable for ritual usage. Moreover, Licinius was doubtless aware that linen was employed for books in neighbouring Etruria, origin of many Roman religious practices. Thus form and production technique would have encouraged belief in the books' antiquity and authority. Their find-spot would have further supported this, since the etymology of 'Moneta' was 'she-who-remembers'. Licinius' radical recasting of the Roman plebeians' struggle for equal rights was enhanced by association with Rome's protector goddess. / Besides setting Licinius' researches within the context of Roman antiquarian investigations, the present paper will exhibit a reconstructed linen book, addressing the usefulness of reconstruction in approaching the ancient world through its material culture.

Janice Sibthorpe (Royal College of Art), 'Texts and textiles: women reading, writing and making in seventeenth-century England'

The Nun's Book, Directions for Weaving Watch Strings, c.1660 is an English manuscript containing instructions plus tiny silk samples to make purse strings and braids with motifs and letters of the alphabet woven into them, by the manipulation of silk threads looped on the fingers. In the middle of the manuscript is a page of 'Poses for Braselets'; eleven rhyming couplets or posies, each a declaration of love and affection. The intention is presumably to weave the text of the posies into the textiles. One sample braid bearing the phrase 'Praise is the prize of this device' supports this notion. / In the British Library there is a similar manuscript dated 1651. The

rhyming couplets are also declarations of love and affection but are loaded with an apparently political motive through implicit and explicit references to the Civil War and falling Kings. / References to women's work and the levels of literacy required to read, if not write, the instructions and to work the braids point to an elite female provenance. The paper will address the implications inherent in these intriguing manuscripts of women reading, writing and making in seventeenth-century England. Mobilising the very limited extant textile evidence of letter braids made beyond the manuscript samples, it considers the extent to which elite women might have used their literacy skills and their craft skills, in a conflation of text and textile fluency, to 'write' messages into braids endowing them with affective qualities both innocent and subversive and how their meaning might have been understood in Early Modern England.

Helen Smith (York), "skillfull clues: orientation, self, and sensation in women's early modern biblical needlework"

In a poem addressed 'To a Lady that wrought a story of the Bible in needle-work', John Cleaveland celebrates the vivid realism of Elizabeth, Lady Paulet's ambitious embroidered 'story of the Incarnation, Passion, Resurrection, and Ascension of our saviour', donated to the University of Oxford in the mid-seventeenth century. Describing Paulet's work as 'not so much wrought as writ', Cleaveland, I will argue, subtly extends (and perhaps inverts) the popular opposition between the needle and the pen, establishing the embroidery itself as scriptural. In celebrating the work's maker, Cleaveland establishes Paulet as 'The first Evangelist, whose skillfull clue / hath made a road to *Bethlem*'. Paulet's 'clue', or ball of thread, thus becomes a tool of imaginative pilgrimage and, I will suggest, an orientation device. Drawing together Bruce Smith's exploration of the material contexts of reading, Sara Ahmed's *Queer Phenomenology*, and Ingold's emphasis both on the line, and on the act of making, I will argue that rather than being – as much scholarship has suggested – a space either for the internalisation of patriarchal *mores* or for self-identification with exemplary women, biblical needlework 'orientated' its viewers – both male and female – in three ways: locating them in physical space, directing their religious and devotional commitments within and beyond the household, and domesticating the religious perils of the East through both the materials of the embroidery (particularly silk) and the reworking of the Biblical landscape within a markedly English context. / It is commonplace to note that biblical stories formed the most common theme of women's embroidery during the early modern period. Cleaveland's poem, however, read alongside surviving examples of sixteenth and seventeenth century embroideries, challenges us to revisit our assumptions concerning the purpose of, and audience for, women's biblical needlework; to query the distinction between text and textile; and to re-orient ourselves by considering the work of orientation performed through the display of elaborate textile 'stories'.

Alison Stewart (artist), 'Newsfabrics'

Through exploring my dyslexia, my art process has evolved using textile techniques, primarily reverse appliqué, machine stitch and free machine embroidery. As I struggle to access the written word I transcribed a series of double pages from newspapers producing a body of work, which I call *Newsfabrics*, a word I created. / I have removed my own communication barriers, taking the written 'word' out of the source material and replaced words with particular fabrics and threads, inviting the audience to unconsciously rebuild text images in their mind, where pattern and imagery give an alternative understanding to the text. / The trailing threads are left attached, which represent loose ends. To draw an analogy – the threads signify the text falling apart.

Rebecca Varley-Winter (Cambridge), 'Collage love affairs: Mina Loy's "Song to Joannes" and Marianne Moore's "Marriage"'

A ready-made reality, whose naïve destination has the air of having been fixed, once and for all (a canoe), finding itself in the presence of another and hardly less absurd reality (a vacuum cleaner), in a place where both of them must feel displaced (a forest), will, by this very fact, escape [...] into a new absolute value, true and poetic: canoe and vacuum cleaner will make love. The mechanism of collage, [...] is revealed by this very simple example. – Max Ernst / The term *collage*, describing artworks created by cutting and pasting, comes from the French *coller* (to paste), but also has a double meaning: *collage* or *ménage à colle* was slang for an illicit relationship. Surrealist artist Max Ernst winks at this through his allegory of collage as an unlikely romance between a canoe and a vacuum cleaner, likening the meeting of incongruous objects to a love affair. / Mina Loy's 'Songs to Joannes' (1917) and Marianne Moore's 'Marriage' (1923) both centre on relationships between men and women, and have been described as 'collages' due to the radical juxtapositions within them. Both poems place emphasis on material objects and the meeting of opposites, and arguably use collage-like techniques. However, Ernst conceives of collage as liberation, an artform akin to free love; Loy and Moore set this liberating potential against the strictures of established gender roles, both invoking and questioning the ideal transformative encounter that Ernst claims to find in the material act of cutting and pasting.

Olivia Will (West Suffolk Hospital NHS Trust), 'All stitched up?: the deceptive language of operative surgery'

In operative surgery, needlework is applied to the material of the human body. A patient's body thus becomes the surgeon's passive craftwork, and this is reflected in surgeons' use of homespun words: for example, we stitch, tie and patch. The ordinariness of this language helpfully disguises the dangerous and sometimes distasteful nature of the work. However, the risk of diminishing the body to a passive textile is well illustrated by the recent report of a surgeon who carved his own initials above a patient's caesarian section wound. / Textile imagery is extensively used in colorectal surgery: we use the phrase 'to fashion a pouch' when small bowel is made into a reservoir to replace an excised rectum. The word 'fashion' not only suggests the impressive needlework involved, but also acts as a reminder that this risky procedure is essentially cosmetic, performed to avoid a lifelong stoma bag. In addition, the phrase literally 'dresses up' the inelegant subject of faecal storage. The surgical term 'buttonholing' is another example of how surgical textile imagery can mislead: it describes the inadvertent damage of overlying skin while dissecting a subdermal plane, belying the functional and sometimes decorative use of buttonholes in dressmaking. / Thus the surgeon's use of textile-related language and metaphor is euphemistic and easily understood, but it is also deceptive. It is a style of communication commonly used only between surgeons. Patients seem to prefer explicitly medical terminology when discussing operations. Perhaps an imagined bionic regeneration is more acceptable than 'make do and mend'?

Beth Williamson (Tate), 'Yarns and tales in the art school: from embroidery to rag-bag to digital studio'

When William Coldstream spearheaded government-led changes in British art education in the 1960s, the place of textiles in the art school altered radically. What had been a largely vocational skills-base training became less proscriptive and students and tutors responded to those new freedoms in their work. / In Goldsmiths in London the ideals of strong departmental heads has, over the years, shifted textiles education increasingly into the realm of fine art and embedded it in theoretical texts that have acted to legitimise its status as fine art. Even in the 1950s satin stitch and cross-stitch were left behind along with neat edges and finishes. In their place came rough edges and stitches of any sort. Students ripped and snipped away at new plastic materials, using wool and string to embroider. In the late 1960s embroiderers began to include materials such as chicken wire, plastic, rags, beads and photographs in their work. In the 1970s and 1980s Goldsmiths moved towards an expanded understanding of textiles and a theoretical underpinning to that work. Now textiles work is located in the Computing Department where the Goldsmiths Digital Studios push textiles forward, stretching definitions, placing text and textile in an ever tighter weave. / This paper, therefore, explores the shifting fate of textiles education at Goldsmiths from c.1960 to the present. Examining the texts behind these changes – government reports and theoretical reflections – as well as the written and verbal response to these texts, it will trace a thread from embroidery, to rag-bag, to digital studio.

Rosalind Wyatt (artist), 'Writing with a needle: an artist's approach'

Having trained in western calligraphy, my fascination has long been with words and the forming of letters. During my postgraduate studies in Textiles, I re-evaluated my approach to mark making which expanded my range of writing tools, from broad edged nib, to brush and then needle. One area of research was the handwritten mark particularly historical letters. The aesthetic quality of mark on paper and the artefact as a whole was the underlying attraction—simple unassuming documents complete with incidental marks all provided new visual material for my work. Closer scrutiny was to reveal a richer layer of experience, one which allowed me as an artist to step into the thoughts and musings of the letter writer. The needle became the tool to bridge this gap, to retrace the handwriting and rethink a particular thought and moment in time. I taught myself to write 'anew' with the needle. Inherent elements of handwriting, like rhythm and spontaneity was vital to impart a visual message, therefore my method was direct, which I call 'trans sewn'. With a paper copy on one side and textile beside, I hand stitch directly onto the fabric, following the line of text—in stitch. / In this paper I will show visuals examples of my stitch work and how this has evolved from pen to needle. The textile has become of equal importance to the original document and now garment has become canvas for instance in 'The stitch lives of Others'. The stories are brought to life through stitch and the garment given a new purpose—a place to explore all the metaphors for life in loose threads, love-tokens, keepsakes, skeins of thread, relics and charms... / I will end the presentation with a live demonstration of writing with a needle.

Mimi Yiu (Georgetown): 'True stitch and false loves: blackwork as texts of feminine desire'

Blackwork, one of the most popular types of needlework in early modern England, consists of a double-running stitch that creates the same design on both sides; hence, the alternate name “true stitch.” Typically worked with black thread on a white ground, this Moorish-inspired embroidery assumed a text-like quality to the English eye. Reading blackwork became a means of reading feminine interiority, since the mysterious workings of a woman’s heart took material form in her needlework. Playwrights repeatedly employed blackwork as both a trope and a staged object to make manifest an otherwise inaccessible interiority. Yet even as the female author of blackwork gained a medium for subjective expression, inscribing a semiotics of desire onto cloth, her needlework problematically adopted an exotic aesthetics and technique. Through the back-door of feminine crafts, critics believed, a perverse blackness infiltrated the very heart of English homes. I have argued elsewhere that Othello’s handkerchief demonstrates the disastrous consequences of a woman’s “unnatural” desire for blackness. In this paper, I wish to expand my argument to examine a cultural anxiety over whether a woman’s hand and handiwork can ever reveal a true heart, or whether her embroidery channels a corrosive “blackness” coursing within. By examining pattern books, rhetoric from the *querelle des femmes*, and a literary sampler of blackwork—likely including Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher’s *Love’s Cure* and Ben Jonson’s *The Case is Altered*—I trace a running association between reading true stitch and reading a woman truly, between textual falsehood and textile authenticity. Can blackwork serve as an inscriptional ground for early modern female subjectivity?

Georgianna Ziegler (Folger Shakespeare Library), 'The Textualities of Lace'

A 1605 French lace pattern book, dedicated to Marie de Medici, includes a long poem “Discours du Lacis,” which begins with the notion that “the divine masterpiece was not made by accident but by art, by number and by measure.” The writer then draws a parallel with the elaborate geometry and designs of lace making, remarking that a finished band of lace is like a portrait of the heavens, “where each space, opened, represents to us a sign.” His patterns incorporate designs – biblical, mythological, cyphers, and others. / My paper will explore some of the intricate connections between the worlds of lace, letters, and signs, looking at lace pattern books in the context of calligraphic manuals, other literature of the period, and bookbinding. I am interested in how the manuals are gendered; in how the (mostly) male authors of lace pattern books appealed to their (mostly) female audience. Looking at the designs themselves, I will examine the interpenetration of lace and letter: how lace appropriates text and text adopts the designs of lace, especially in the art of calligraphy. Finally I will focus on work by calligrapher Esther Inglis and by an English binder working in cut vellum. / Most work on lace manuals has focused on identifying them and the great variety of designs produced. Recent literary scholarship, such as that of Stallybrass, Jones and Frye has looked at the cultural contexts of embroidery. I propose to complicate this discussion by focusing on the texts and textualities of lace itself.

Andrew Zurcher (Cambridge), 'The Shirt of Nessus: Textiles and Tragedy'

When Antony cries out in Act IV scene xii of *Antony and Cleopatra* that 'the shirt of Nessus is upon me', he implies a parallel between his life and that of Herakles, between his and his alleged ancestor's death. Sent the poison-smear'd shirt of the dead centaur Nessus, supposedly by his jealous and faithless wife, Herakles died in furious agony. Antony pursues the parallel in his ensuing lines by calling for Herakles' 'rage', wishing for an identification so complete that he blends his own body with that of the Tiryinthian hero: '[T]each me, / Alcides, thou mine ancestor, thy rage: / Let me lodge Lichas on the horns o' the moon; / And with those hands, that grasp'd the heaviest club, / Subdue my worthiest self.' Antony's invocation of the shirt of Nessus, which once clove to Herakles like a second, agonizing skin, provokes a problem of identity. Just as Herakles died in Nessus' own poisonous agony, now Antony in turn will die in Herakles' skin, using on himself his own, which is to say Herakles', hands. Shakespeare's configuration here of jealousy, problems of identity, and the materiality of the worn shirt reflects an ancient tragic tradition, evident in Sophocles' *Trachiniae*, Euripides' *Medea*, and Seneca's *Hercules Oetaeus*. This paper will expose the traditional configuration of these elements in ancient and early modern tragedy, and will show how the woven fabric of the shirt, in plays from the *Trachiniae* to *Othello*, emblemizes a legal and metaphysical paradox at the centre of tragic experience.