Symposium Summary: Faith, Fashion, Identity: Contemporary Muslim Styles
By Laura L. Camerlengo, Associate Curator of Costume and Textile Arts

On Saturday, November 17, the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco hosted the symposium, Faith, Fashion, Identity: Contemporary Muslim Styles. Held in conjunction with the Museums’ current special exhibition, Contemporary Muslim Fashions, this day-long series of lectures offered focused examinations of contemporary Muslim modest dress codes around the world from a diverse array of international scholars and subject specialists.

The symposium was convened by Contemporary Muslim Fashions co-curators Jill D’Alessandro, Curator in Charge of Costume and Textile Arts, and Laura L. Camerlengo, Associate Curator, with Reina Lewis, Artscom Centenary Professor of Cultural Studies at London College of Fashion, University of the Arts London, and consulting curator of Contemporary Muslim Fashions. Jill D’Alessandro began the day with welcome and introductory remarks that situated the current exhibition within the larger discourse of academic study about Muslim modest fashion. Indeed, while modest clothing worn by Muslim women has been the subject of intense news and fashion coverage over the past five years, it has been the subject of anthropological and sociological study for several decades, with many of the symposium’s presenters leading research in the field.

The symposium’s keynote lecture was presented by Özlem Sandikci Turkdogan, Professor of Marketing at the University of Glasgow Adam Smith Business School. Sandikci Turkdogan’s research addresses sociocultural dimensions of consumption, and focuses on the relationship between globalization, marketing, and culture. In her keynote, Faith and Profit: Fashioning the Muslim Consumer, Sandikci Turkdogan traced the formation of Muslim consumer subjectivity and the concomitant rise of

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fashionable veiling by mapping out the changing practices and market dynamics over many decades. She also elaborated on the tensions, contradictions, and potentials between the practices of Islamic piety and marketing, which have been long-standing among fashionable Muslim modest dressers for several generations.

The subsequent lecturers offered regional explorations of modest style cultures from areas that are spotlighted in the Contemporary Muslim Fashions exhibition and catalogue, specifically of Saudi Arabia, Turkey, the United States, and Indonesia. Amélie Le Renard, permanent researcher in sociology at the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, Paris, addressed the role of dress in the symbolic construction of Saudi nationhood in her talk, The Politics of Dress in Saudi Arabia: Constructions of Nationhood, Norms and Transgressions. The lecture expanded on research from her book, A Society of Young Women: Opportunities of Place, Power and Reform in Saudi Arabia (Stanford University Press, 2014). As Le Renard noted, young urban Saudi women use dress to inhabit, transgress, and/or transform cultural norms, and their varied practices reveal diverse understandings of norms and agency, modesty and fashion, and femininity and masculinity. She further explained that these transgressions in time create alternate norms.

Anna Secor, Professor of Geography and the Hajja Razia Sharif Sheikh Islamic Studies Professor at the University of Kentucky, followed. In her lecture, Between Fashion and Hijab: Marketing and Consuming Islamic Dress in Turkey, Secor explored how fashion and Islamic dress become negotiable elements of everyday practice in Turkey. Indeed, fashionable Islamic dress for women, or tesettür, has been a growing segment of the textile industry in Turkey since the 1980s, yet its meaning and practice remain passionately debated. While there is no easy understanding between the demands for modesty that underlie tesettür and the ever-changing demands of fashion, as Secor noted, Turkish modest dressers accept this disjuncture and knowingly engage in a constant mediation between the two.

After an intermission, Su’ad Abdul Khabeer, Associate Professor of American Culture and Arab and Muslim American Studies at the University of Michigan, traced the history of U.S. Muslim fashion through the fashion innovations of Black Muslim women in the United States. In her presentation, Searching Umi’s Closet: Black Muslim Women as Innovators and Icons of Muslim Style, she shared her research from her publication Muslim Cool: Race, Religion, and Hip Hop in the United States (NYU Press, 2016) as well as from her essay for the Contemporary Muslim Fashions catalogue. Abdul Khabeer argued that Black Muslim women are the original authors of U.S. Muslim Style, whose innovations in earlier decades laid the groundwork for today’s trends in Muslim modest fashion. In her talk, she explored how these early innovators approached fashion with cosmopolitanism, from everyday dressing to yearly fashion shows, and drew inspiration from styles of the African diaspora, Muslim-majority cultures, and local Black and U.S. styles. Indeed, fashion design has long relied on a multitude of forms for creative fertilization. But as Carla Jones, Associate Professor in the Department of Anthropology, University of Colorado, Boulder, and Contemporary Muslim Fashions catalogue contributor, addressed in her ensuing talk, Inspired Cosmopolitanism: Indonesian Modest Dress in National and Transnational Context, this process of inspiration can sometimes generate a divided global fashion map. In this mapping, as Jones explained, designers in the global capitals of Paris, London, or New York are recognized as autonomous authors of artistic expression inspired by global travels, while designers outside of those capitals are simply conveyors of traditional culture. In her presentation, Jones reversed this dynamic by situating Jakarta, Indonesia, as an alternative fashion capital, and by examining how modest fashion designers in the world’s largest majority-Muslim country take the concept of inspiration seriously as a both an aesthetic and spiritual process.

The symposium’s plenary session was presented by Reina Lewis, who framed the day’s presentations by addressing how regional particularities connect to larger narratives and trends in the Muslim modest fashion sector, and Laura L. Camerlengo offered closing remarks. The Museums’ staff was delighted to see many Textile Arts Council members in attendance at the symposium. For those who were unable to attend the event, the Contemporary Muslim Fashions catalogue may offer additional insights on these and other related topics.
From the TEXTILE ARTS COUNCIL Board Chair

January 2019

I am so fortunate to assume the responsibilities of the new board chair at a time when the Textile Arts Council (TAC) is thriving. We have seen so many exciting developments in programming and events over the past few years. 2018 has truly been a banner year, and we’re ending that year on a high note.

With a donation of $50,000, TAC took a major step in becoming a Significant Supporter of the Contemporary Muslim Fashions exhibit, which opened in September. This ground-breaking exhibit has received international as well as national recognition for addressing a wide range of Muslim dress codes and helping redefine the scope of the term “modest dressing.”

Our November Textile Bazaar was a tremendous success. 38 vendors participated this year with many new local artisans and collectors and many returning old friends, all adding to the diverse mix of product and origin. Our strategic and focused social media notices did much to drive attendance. Based on the success of this year’s event, we’ve already scheduled Sunday, November 10, 2019 for next year’s annual bazaar.

Our annual Holiday Party at Krimsa Gallery on December 5 provided an opportunity for us to meet and celebrate the holidays in a warm social environment filled with good food, good wine, good friends.

I want to offer a personal thank you to Leslee Budge for her four years of dedication and leadership as TAC’s board chair. We are fortunate that she will continue to be a positive force for TAC in her new position as co-chair for Operations.

I look forward to seeing all of you at our upcoming lectures and workshops, and I look forward to meeting with and working with all of you over the next two years. Your ideas and input are vital to our organization, and I would love to hear from you. My best to you all for a great 2019!

Shirley Juster
Board Chair
Welcome New Director of Museums

Please join us in welcoming Thomas P. Campbell, the new director and CEO of the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco. Campbell comes to us from New York City, where he last served as director and CEO of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Of special interest to TAC members may be his background as curator at the Antonio Ratti Textile Center at the Met, where he was the mind and force behind the acclaimed exhibitions *Tapestry in the Baroque: Threads of Splendor* (2007) and *Tapestry in the Renaissance: Art and Magnificence* (2002), the latter named Exhibition of the Year by *Apollo* magazine. An art historian educated at Oxford and the Courtauld Institute, University of London, Campbell has dedicated his career to the preservation, study, and promotion of art as a gateway to human understanding. He spent this past year studying the changing cultural landscape as a Getty/Rothschild Fellow in Los Angeles and the United Kingdom, and is thus no stranger to California. He now looks forward to leading our Museums here in San Francisco. Learn more about Tom Campbell [here](https://www.famsf.org/press-room/fine-arts-museums-san-francisco-appoint-thomas-p-campbell-director-and-ceo)

TAC’s successful fundraising doubles purchase of costume cabinets

“Fund-a-Need” successfully raised $4,895, enough to purchase and ship not one but two brand-new costume storage cabinets. The cabinets were ordered in mid-October from Delta Designs in Topeka, Kansas, and were delivered to the FAMSF in mid-December.

Each powder-coated, well-gasketed steel cabinet is designed to safely store approximately twenty costumes. They arrive at a much-needed time as the Textile Conservation Lab processes the 500-ensemble gift from Christine Suppes that arrived in 2017.

The two new cabinets won’t be discernable from the other eight costume cabinets located along the second floor hallway of the de Young Museum, but we will know who made them happen!

Suppes Costume Collection in the Textile Conservation Dry Lab, in the process of being condition-reported, inventoried, and prepared for permanent collection storage.
In late May, the FAMSF announced the hiring of their first “Collections Care Assistant,” Julie McInnis. Julie comes to us after working at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. and several smaller museums in San Diego. She works three days a week in Object Conservation and two days a week in Textile Conservation.

Julie's work spans the whole of the permanent collection, as she has been charged with taking on the conservation portion of the Museums’ Integrated Pest Management Program (IPM). This is an active program that aims to keep the Museums’ art pest-free, with responsibilities that include gallery maintenance, monitoring “blunder” and pheromone traps, maintaining the digital IPM log, identifying pests and conducting pest treatments—in this case, by overseeing our newly renovated freezer room, located on the lower level of the de Young near the loading dock. Julie has relieved both Object and Textile Conservators of many caretaking tasks and we are grateful to have her skilled assistance.

In late October, the Textile Conservation Lab welcomed Jennifer Nieling as their first “Costume Mounting Assistant”. Jennifer has an M.A. from the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York. She previously worked at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Nantucket Historical Association, and as a freelance Collections and Exhibitions Consultant.

Right off the starting line, Jennifer is working with Sarah Gates to process the 500-ensemble Suppes costume collection and with Anne Getts to prepare both the Summer of Love and Contemporary Muslim Fashion exhibitions for travel to Europe. This position has been lobbied for over a decade. It is set to last 18-20 months, but we hope to make it permanent. FAMSF textile curators and conservators are all looking forward to utilizing Jennifer’s knowledge and skills over the next year, and hopefully beyond.

Thank you TEXTILE ARTS COUNCIL Volunteers!

Many thanks to all of you who graciously volunteered to make our events and outreach successful in 2018. Your time and energy are much appreciated! We encourage members who wish to become more actively engaged with our textile and fiber arts community to join a committee to plan and participate in our TAC activities in the coming year, sign up for our volunteer listings, and share your appreciation and expertise with us.
TEXTILE ARTS COUNCIL TOURS AND WORKSHOPS

February 2, 2019

**Jogakbo Bojagi Workshop**
with Youngmin Lee
Saturday, February 2, 2019, 9:45 am - 4:30 pm
Wells Fargo Room, de Young Museum (in the Tower)
Admission: Workshop is open to members of TAC, $130 including all materials, pre-registration is required.

March 5, 2019

**‘Kimono Refashioned’ Tour at the Asian Arts Museum**
Tuesday, March 5, 2019, 10:30am or 1pm (tour is held twice; 2 different choices of time)
Asian Art Museum, 200 Larkin St., San Francisco
Admission: $25 per person, includes museum entrance and tour. Open to members of TAC plus one guest. Pre-registration is required. Sign up deadline: Friday, February 22, 2019.

March 17, 2019  11:30 AM

**Curator-led Tour of ‘Material Domestications’ at the Museum of Craft and Design**
with Curator Elizabeth Kozlowski
Sunday, March 17, 2019, 11:30am
Museum of Craft and Design
2569 Third Street, San Francisco, CA
Admission: $25, pre-registration required. Open to Textile Arts Council members plus one guest. Sign up deadline: Tuesday, March 12, 2019

Tour registration is open to current TAC members plus one guest. To register or for more information contact the TAC office.

Textile Arts Council
Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco
www.textileartscouncil.org
Textile Arts Council

Don’t miss these exciting TAC events!

- “Hanbok in a Greater Cultural Context”
  - Minjee Kim, PhD., Independent Dress Historian
  - Saturday, January 19, 2019 10am • Koret Auditorium \ de Young

- “The Seven Thousand Year Conversation: Tracing Ancestry through Weaving Traditions in the Asia-Pacific Region”
  - Chris Buckley, Independent Researcher
  - Saturday, February 9, 2019, 10 am • Koret Auditorium \ de Young

- The Twelfth Annual Caroline and H. McCoy Jones Memorial Lecture: “Knots, Art, and History; Shifting Perspectives and Perceptions within the Berlin Carpet Collection”
  - with Anna Beselin
  - Saturday, February 9th, 2019 1:00 p.m. • Koret Auditorium \ de Young

- The Carol Walter Sinton Program for Craft Arts: “Creating Uncommon Threads for the Box Project”
  - Virginia Davis, Artist & Scholar; Ana Lisa Hedstrom, Fiber Artist & Designer; Gyongy Laky, Artist
  - Saturday, March 9, 2019 10 am • Koret Auditorium \ de Young

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