



LACE UNARCHIVED

FRIDAY 23 FEBRUARY – THURSDAY 29 MARCH 2018

The Lace Archive housed in the School of Art & Design at Nottingham Trent University (NTU) is unique in many respects; it goes beyond what might ordinarily be expected of a repository of textiles. Loose hand and machine made lace samples sit alongside products of a bygone era. The collection provides an opportunity to examine beautiful fabrics and samples of lace while unveiling insight into inter-related issues such as the social context, education and the design process. Established at the beginnings of art school education in the UK in 1843, the archive offers testimony of the teaching process in the Victorian era demonstrating a particular focus on the lace design process; from technical resolve and 'draughting' to commercial product application. The archive, a result of benefactions from past industries, demonstrated the support and belief in the need for a school of art and design based in Nottingham. The archive continues to grow and develop with contemporary additions and donations. It captures the rich and valuable heritage of Nottingham lace and the city's unique and central position in the development of this now global industry.

Lace Unarchived reveals the legacy of the Art School, established in 1843, and its impact on generations of lace designers who worked within the region and across the globe. 'Stories' from the archive include Harry Cross's drawings from the Battle of Britain panel, and NTU alumnus William Pegg's shift from award winning designer of lace to expressing his socialist beliefs through this medium. Student work from the early 20th century reveals the pedagogic process in the Art School, while hand and machine made lace and work expose the hidden process behind developing a lace fabric – designing and draughting.

NTU's recent collaboration with high street retailer Oasis highlights the archival design inspiration through to the final collection and includes the limited edition dress designed by fashion student, Robert Goddard.

This rich and unique heritage of NTU's Lace Archive is juxtaposed against collections and collaborations from contemporary commercial manufacturers of Nottingham lace: Cluny Lace, England's remaining manufacturer and situated in this region; Morton, Young and Borland (MYB) Scotland's last lace manufacturer from the Irvine Valley, and Sophie Hallette, from Caudry, France, one of a handful remaining in that region. These companies work alongside designers to produce high quality, beautiful and evocative creations, and manufacture their lace on Nottingham technology invented in this region some 200 years ago.

On display is a coat produced by Burberry, who selected Cluny Lace for their recent lace inspired collection, and whom have continued to produce these lace trench coats due to their commercial success. From Sophie Hallette, who work alongside a number of fashion designers, we highlight the collaboration with Mal Burkinshaw, Director of Fashion at Edinburgh School of Art. Mal has created a series of jackets in response to body shapes and garments from paintings in the Scottish National Portrait Gallery. He uses lace to evoke craftsmanship and status through a dialogue between past and present fusing the modern classic jacket with the renaissance. Timorous Beasties, renowned for their challenging and dynamic conversational wallpapers and fabrics have experimented with lace since 2005. Their fabric, produced by MYB, Devil Damask, demonstrates their mastery of this process and utilizes a playful approach to image and shadow. Sarah Taylor, Senior Research Fellow at Edinburgh Napier University and Sara Robertson, Tutor at the Royal College of Art, have collaborated with MYB and Mike Stoane Lighting to develop light emitting lace woven in the tradition of Scottish Madras.

Artists James Winnett and Matthew Woodham have been commissioned to produce work for this exhibition. James Winnett has reinvented found lace patterns sourced from salvage yards, originally produced in Nottingham and Ayrshire by painting into and onto them to explore the relationship between industrial and artistic labour. Matthew Woodham has created a sculptural video piece with monitors which will feature digitised archival items accompanied by the fabricated and the real stories of these pieces.

2018 is a special year for Nottingham Trent University as we mark the 175th anniversary since our founding college opened its doors in 1843. That college, the Nottingham Government School of Design, was the fourth to open in the UK to serve growing demands for innovation and skills in an industrialising society and protect our global position from the new wave of emerging manufacturers. The focus that characterises NTU today – to develop the knowledge, skills and innovations that our economy and society need – has its roots in these origins 175 years ago.

Lace Unarchived is a timely reminder in Nottingham Trent of the University's part in this story. Nottingham Lace technology spurred an industry which, when combined with an art school, flourished and remains an important catalyst to innovation and creativity.

Please visit www.boningtongallery.co.uk for more information about the exhibiting artists and associated events.



Image G.W.PRICE 1943 portfolio collection



Image TIMOROUS BEASTIES, *Devil Damask*
Front cover image SARA ROBERTON AND SARAH TAYLOR