

## [Fabrics in Motion: Mediality and Materiality of Textiles in Early 20th Century Film and Media Culture](#)

Announcement published by Bianka-Isabell Scharmann on Monday, May 2, 2022

Type:

Conference

Date:

May 31, 2022 to June 2, 2022

Location:

Germany

Subject Fields:

Art, Art History & Visual Studies, Cultural History / Studies, Digital Humanities, Film and Film History, Theatre & Performance History / Studies

The waving seam of a skirt, floating veils, a jittering sail in the wind: Especially early films displayed moving fabrics as spectacles of their own right. A film screening could thus become a sort of object lesson in textile movement and materiality – for instance, when films made visible (by the use of slow motion) that silk chiffon moves differently from coarsely woven cotton; and the hairs of a fur collar, when moved by a breeze, seemed to emerge from the screen almost haptically.

The conference aims to discuss moving textiles in film and media culture of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and to investigate their medial and aesthetic as well as their material, social and economic constellations. The premise of the conference is that within the media networks of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century fabrics were experienced in new and unprecedented ways as «being in motion». These new modes of experiencing textiles concerned not only trends in then modern fashion (e.g. the tendency towards more dynamic cutting patterns or the increasing processing of light-flowing materials), but more importantly media and artistic representations ostentatiously exposing the movement of fabrics.

With putting the emphasis on «moving fabrics», we consciously and programmatically choose a perspective that runs transversally to categories like «costume», «clothing» or «fashion». On the one hand, this approach allows to address not only the symbolic and social regime of clothing, but also the sensual qualities of textiles and to look at the relations between dress and other «moving fabrics» within the mise-en-scène and the image composition. On the other hand, we would like to invite reflection on moving materials in films as part of a larger visual and movement culture in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. How do cinema's moving fabrics relate to Art Nouveau's recurrent depictions of female figures surrounded by fluttering veils; to the undulant costumes of serpentine dancers like Loïe Fuller; to the dresses of early fashion photography that were puffed up by the wind; or to the naturalistic and impressionistic motifs of flagging sails or clotheslines?

Citation: Bianka-Isabell Scharmann. *Fabrics in Motion: Mediality and Materiality of Textiles in Early 20th Century Film and Media Culture*. H-Announce. 05-27-2022.

<https://networks.h-net.org/node/73374/announcements/10157501/fabrics-motion-mediality-and-materiality-textiles-early-20th>

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**Registration:** [fabrics-in-motion@uni-koeln.de](mailto:fabrics-in-motion@uni-koeln.de)

**Website:** <https://mekuwi.phil-fak.uni-koeln.de/fabrics-in-motion>

The conference is supported by the Fritz Thyssen Stiftung.  
Conference languages are German and English.

## Conference Program

### Tuesday, 31.05.2022

Filmclub 813 e.V., Hahnenstraße 6, 50667 Köln

20:00 Welcome: Kristina Köhler

Mila Ganeva (Ohio, USA):

Fashion on the Move: The Travel Outfits of the Stars in Silent Cinema

Chair: Bianka-Isabell Scharmann

Followed by Film Program „Fabrics in Motion“

Piano: Oliver Richters

Introduction: Pia Bornus

Please register in advance: [fabrics-in-motion@uni-koeln.de](mailto:fabrics-in-motion@uni-koeln.de).

**Wednesday, 01.06.2022**

Alter Senatssaal, Hauptgebäude Universität zu Köln

09:00 Registration

09:15 Address of Welcome by Kristina Köhler, Pia Bornus, and Bianka-Isabell Scharmann

Kristina Köhler (Köln):  
How it Moves. Experiencing Textiles in Early 20th Century Visual Culture

09:45 Kerstin Fooker (Hamburg):  
'Queering' Gender and the Nation. Modern Girls as Mobile Bodies in Japanese Silent Cinema

Chair: Sona Petrossian

10:30 Coffee Break

11:00 Gundula Wolter (Berlin):  
Mode im Wind. Über zufällige, imaginierte und künstlich erzeugte Kleidermetamorphosen in Bildern der Mode

11:45 Susanne Wittekind (Köln):

Wie flatternde Hemden im Wind. Gustave Caillebottes Blick auf die Republik

Chair: Sophie-Luise Mävers

12:30 Lunch Break

14:00 Jelena Rakin (Zürich):  
Color Spectres. Phantom Fabrics in the Painted Films of the Silent Era

14:45 Priska Morrissey (Rennes):  
The Spectacle of Costumes in Motion in the Films of Georges Méliès.  
An Aesthetics of Unveiling

Chair: Dennis Göttel

15:30 Coffee Break

16:00 Bianka-Isabell Scharmann (Köln / Amsterdam):  
Incorporating the Turntable. A Promise of Multi-Perspectivity

16:45 Evelyn Echle (Pforzheim):  
Moving Lines. Elsa Schiaparelli Between Fashion, Cinema and Art

Chair: Kristina Köhler

### **Thursday, 02.06.2022**

Alter Senatssaal, Hauptgebäude Universität zu Köln

10:00 Marie-Aude Baronian (Amsterdam):  
Unpacking the Wardrobe, Imagining Costumes

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- 10:45 Eike Wittrock (Graz):  
The Theatrical History of the Feather. Chapter 4:  
Feathers and Dance (Photography)
- 11:30 Peter W. Marx (Köln):  
Theatrical Textiles. Performance, Props, and Imagination  
  
Chair: Pia Bornus
- 12:15 Lunch Break
- 13:15 Stéphanie Chessel (Utrecht):  
Cinema and Fashion. Dressing up in the Costume of Art. (French  
Fashion Presentations in Newsreels Between 1909 and 1914)
- 14:00 Workshop Talk  
Elizabeth Castaldo Lundén (Stockholm):  
What Was Your Question? Deciphering How the Digital Humanities  
Can Aid to the Study of Fashion  
  
Chair: Bianka-Isabell Scharmann
- 15:00 End of the Conference

Contact Info:

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