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Dress and the African Diaspora Network

This network will address the under-researched status of dress and the African diaspora. It will focus on Africa, Europe, USA, the Caribbean and South America. The provision of a series of forums over two years where established and new researchers can discuss the consumption, production, collection and display of dress, textiles and beauty regimes is an unprecedented method of developing this area of study. Consequently the network will provide a broader knowledge base for a wide variety of international academics, practitioners and students.

Africa, Europe, the Caribbean, South America and the U.S. have experienced historical and cultural ruptures that resulted in the creation of the African diaspora, notably slavery, colonialism, imperialism, and eventually independence. These events have had a continuing impact on the way people within the African diaspora have negotiated, and defined their sense of self despite the legacy of inequality meted out through such social demarcations as 'the ruling fiction of race', ethnicity and class. This could occur through the stylistic attention made to everyday dress, textiles for occasional or traditional clothing, street styles or fashion trends. Such a context provides the basis for the network to tease out a wide range of issues for further study, from local and regional concerns to the connections between different cultural geographies, as in the export and import of goods and ideas.

The present situation is that the subject area does not have a resource base, and the isolation of young and established scholars creating methodologies to discuss dress in different parts of the African diaspora. In order to provide a strong basis for future proficient study, then this network of established and new researchers meeting as a forum to discuss current research, and to highlight new avenues of study, will be an invaluable contribution.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The primary aim of the *Dress and the African Diaspora Network* is to provide a forum for debate in order to identify new directions of study, and to create information resources for scholars in the field. The objectives are to:

- Hold closed workshops and one open symposium to identify areas of further investigation in the field of the study of dress and the African diaspora
- Establish an internet-based discussion forum

- Establish a foundation for the study of dress within the African diaspora
- Support younger scholars entering the field
- Provide a larger knowledge base of researchers, curators, exhibitions and archives.