



Digital Strategies for Heritage (DISH) 2013

2 & 3 December 2013, De Doelen Rotterdam

Chefs' Table session

Table Number: 13

Table Session: 04

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Title: How to protect the historic with brand new strategies?

Introduction

Modekern collects, provides access to, studies and exhibits the archives of internationally renowned Dutch fashion designers in order to broaden and deepen the understanding of modern Dutch fashion history. Modekern is a unique collaboration that combines the strength, infrastructure and expertise of Het Nieuwe Instituut, ArtEZ Institute of the Arts, the Museum voor Moderne Kunst Arnhem (MMKA) and the Gelders Archief. Modekern shows that it's possible for organisations to step outside their traditional roles and collaborate on a long-term basis. The Gelders Archief handles archiving activities, the MMKA is responsible for exhibitions and education and ArtEZ Institute of the Arts conducts research. HNI provides support for Modekern and serves as a liaison with the National Design Archive (Nationaal Ontwerp Archief, NOA). Showcasing the archive of Piet Paris, Modekern is eager to discuss new and creative ways to preserve archives and make them available to the general public.

Modekern exhibits designers' sketches, clothing-making techniques, and look books, invitations and other publicity materials both online and in physical space. Designers, students and amateur fashion designers can use the archives for study and inspiration. Modekern Arnhem organises exhibitions of acquired materials and operates an educational programme for technical colleges and secondary schools. Modekern is affiliated with the National Design Archive (NOA) and Europeana and receives support from the city of Arnhem and the province of Gelderland.

Discussion

We are talking about:

- * organization of Modekern
- * fashion collections archive digital

What are fashion archives? It is not really about the clothes, the end product. It is about the sketches and patterns. Fashion archives aren't dusty, but creative and sometimes colorful.

What does Modekern:

- * The website of Modekern (<http://www.modekern.nl>) is a bridge between the complete archive of the Gelders Archive and the public.
- * Give workshop for educational purposes.
- * Make exhibitions.
- * Provide information.

Fashion houses value archiving, the bigger fashion houses have even an archivist.

Next year June a congress will be held about the same and other points as discussed today.

NOA (the national design archive, <http://nationaleontwerparchief.nl>) lists the most endangered archives to ensure they will be preserved.

There was no place to preserve design archives. Current existing archives did not react to a call for help. The city of Arnhem stood up to pick up the role of saving the design and fashion archives. Both the samples and the digital files are archived. The end results are not really part of their focus.

The brand new thing about this, is that Modekern isn't an organization. It is funded within other organizations. There will be no overhead costs when the archive doesn't work.

You see a shift in how designers work. They already often work digital, so the collection doesn't need to be digitized. But sometimes the digital part was the hardest part to archive because the information was stored in outdated systems where it was hard to get the information out of.

The challenge is in what do you do with digital archive. It is an opportunity for the future.

There is no copyright for personal use. Modekern follows the rules of the Gelders Archive. When designers are still working there are two options:

- * loan (the copyright stays with the designer)
- * copyright disappears

Collaboration with Wikimedia:

There are different benefits for Modekern, for example for appdevelopers. If the goal is to reach a larger audience, you need to open up for the public. It is not important where the information is, it is important if it is usable. It forces your organization to think about copyright.

You have to take baby steps, you can't release everything at one time.

In the process of adopting a new archive a selection could be made (by the "current parents" of the archive) between the material that can be set free and the material that's not reusable.

Challenge and opportunity is to involve designers more in the proces. One question that comes up: is fashion heritage or a product? Fashion archives don't consider themselves cultural heritage most of the times.

Focus of Modekern is from 1960 till now, Dutch fashion designers with a international allure. Examples are Koos van de Akker, Spijkers & Spijkers. For the future the focus maybe will change, for example towards fashion photography.

Question:

How are you measuring the results of your project?

We have the results of visitors for the exhibitions, how many booklets have been sold, traffic on the website.

There hasn't been a big campaign about Modekern yet. The next phase is get the back office in order and then the focus can be set on tracking the (re)use of the material.

The best result for Modekern will be that it will be self-supporting, without the help of Het Nieuwe Instituut.