



# Digital Strategies for Heritage (DISH) 2013

2 & 3 December 2013, De Doelen Rotterdam

## Chefs' Table session

**Table Number:** 13

**Table Session:** 05

**Table Host:** Anja Tollenaar and Flora van Gaalen

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

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### 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

How does Modekern work as organization?

Gelders Archive, Artez Hogeschool voor de Kunsten, Museum for Modern Art in Arnhem are the partners. The Modekern isn't an organization itself, the different partners make the organization. Funding comes from the organizations, the city of Arnhem etc.

The focus of Modekern is more the paper behind fashion. Theoretical research for fashion is important, that is something the archive can provide.

Modekern makes/does:

- \* exhibitions
- \* booklets
- \* own website

\* workshops

Koos van den Akker, designer famous for the Bill Cosby sweaters, will be presented in an exhibition next year.

How do designers work with the digital archives? Inspirational is that big fashion houses hire archivists. Valentino for example made an online museum. Helmut Lang keeps track of his collection online.

Goal of Modekern: to develop more tools to work with the digital archive.

NOA (Nationaal Ontwerp Archief) is an institution with various ambitions, for example to recognize archives and their concern. NOA works together with other organizations, like the RKD (Rijksbureau voor Kunsthistorische Documentatie). Institutions are often interested in working together with the NOA. There are difficulties with the copyright. For archives in danger it is important to get in contact with the NOA, to make sure the collection doesn't disappear.

The exhibition about Piet Paris looked for the public more if it came from the museum then from Modekern. It is important to get attention from the designers, that goes with baby steps. Fashion houses think the archive is important, but it is been used more for themselves then for the public. What Modekern wants to do, is to make available for the public. When a fashion collection is already digitized, that doesn't necessarily mean that it is easy to access.

Discussion point:

What tools can enhance the use of digital (fashion) heritage?

You can convince smaller fashion houses to archive digital, by showing them it also can be used to boost sales.

Are institutions, for example the AMFI (Amsterdam Fashion Institute), not a good tool to use? As users the art educational institutes are a good target.

Can you use the patterns from the designers to make clothes?

That is a matter of how the copyright is, when the designer hands over his archive to the Modekern the rules of the Gelders Archive are applied. Then there is no more copyright. In discussion with the designers, maybe a few are interested to do it this way. The designers then could get in contact with their users. When somebody wants to use the patterns for the wrong reasons, the person can go to the shop and buy the piece of clothing and tear it apart to reproduce it.

The focus of Modekern is now based on the high fashion, maybe in the future it will develop into more mainstream fashion.

Are there connections with other parties (commercial)?

For the longer term the Modekern wants to look into other parties, for now not yet.