

Cotsen Textile Traces Roundtable

# Textile Futures

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November 6-7, 2025

10:00am - 1:00pm, Washington, D.C. (EDT)



THE GEORGE WASHINGTON  
UNIVERSITY MUSEUM  
THE TEXTILE MUSEUM

# Roundtable

The future of textiles is a vast and complex topic. Researchers, designers, and stewards of cultural heritage are grappling with both their concerns over the impact of industrial overproduction and overconsumption and the exciting new frontiers for materials innovation and sustainability. The *Cotsen Textile Futures* roundtable brings together an interdisciplinary panel of distinguished scholars and professionals to explore *Textile Futures* through three themes: **Old Methods, New Applications; New Materials and Technologies; Traditions and Transitions.**

*Hosted online by the Cotsen Textile Traces Study Center, this event will take place on November 6 and 7, 2025. This event will coincide with the 2025 exhibition, **Source Material: Lessons in Responsible Fashion** at The George Washington University Museum and The Textile Museum. The *Textile Futures* roundtable is a project of the Cotsen Center and is supported by the Cotsen Textile Traces Study Collection Endowment.*

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## The George Washington University Museum and The Textile Museum

Located on GW's campus in downtown D.C., the museum celebrates art, history and world cultures. Public programs and exhibitions are inspired by diverse collections of global textiles and local history. Resources for students and scholars include the peer-reviewed *The Textile Museum Journal*, the Cotsen Textile Traces Study Center and the Albert H. Small Center for National Capital Area Studies.

[www.museum.gwu.edu](http://www.museum.gwu.edu)

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## Cotsen Textile Traces Study Center

The museum's Cotsen Textile Traces Study Center is dedicated to textile research and houses the Cotsen Textile Traces Study Collection, which represents a lifetime of collecting by business leader and philanthropist Lloyd Cotsen (1929-2017). One of the world's most significant textile study collections, it comprises nearly 4,000 fragments dating from antiquity to the present, offering insights into human creativity around the world.

[www.museum.gwu.edu/cotsen-textile-traces-study-center](http://www.museum.gwu.edu/cotsen-textile-traces-study-center)

**10:00am-11:00am**

**Welcome Remarks**

*Introduction to the roundtable*

**Panel 1: Old Methods, New Applications**

**Lessons in Responsible Fashion**

*Katrina Orsini, Programs Associate for Academic Engagement, GWU Museum & The Textile Museum, Washington DC, USA*

**Kumihimo Braiding: From Traditional to High-Tech**

*Makiko Tada, artist and researcher in braiding, Japan*

**Strip Cloth Reimagined with Upcycled Denim**

*Nkwo Onwuka, designer and founder of NKWO Design, Nigeria*

**11:00am-11:20am**

**Panel Discussion and Q&A**

**11:20am-11:30pm**

**Break**

**11:30am-12:30pm**

**Panel 2: New Materials and Technologies**

**Rejuvenated Fibers from Textile Waste and Renewable Energy in Textiles**

*Abhishek Bansal, Head of Sustainability for Arvind Limited, India*

**E-Textiles**

*Stephen Beeby, Professor of Electronic Systems & Device, University of Southampton, England*

**The Viability of Bio Materials for Fashion Projects**

*Charlotte McCurdy, designer and researcher, educator at Stanford University, California, USA*

**12:30pm-12:50pm**

**Panel Discussion and Q&A**

# Day 2

Friday, November 7 | 10:00am-12:00pm

**10:00am-10:10am**      **Introduction to the Cotsen Center**

**10:10am-11:10am**      **Panel 3: Traditions and Transitions**

**Embroidery, Craft Heritage, and Women's Autonomy**

*Karishma Swali, Creative Director of Chanakya International and Founder & Chairperson of the Chanakya School of Craft, Mumbai, India*

**Conscious Velvet: Tiziano Guardini and Bevilacqua Reimagine Tradition**

*Tiziano Guardini, Conscious Creative Director, designer, and co-founder of the Guardini Ciuffreda studio, Italy*

**Timeless: Textile Traditions, New Ideas, and Experiments**

*Hector Manuel Meneses Lozano, Director of the Textile Museum of Oaxaca, Mexico*

**11:10am-12:00pm**      **Panel Discussion and Q&A**

# Abstracts and Speakers

Thursday, November 6

Old Methods, New Applications

## Lessons in Responsible Fashion

*Katrina Orsini, Programs Associate for Academic Engagement, GWU Museum & The Textile Museum, Washington, DC*

The impacts of overproduction and overconsumption in the global fashion industry are uniquely modern challenges, but promising solutions can be found in textile traditions from the past. The 2025 exhibition, *Source Material: Lessons in Responsible Fashion*, pairs historical garments from The Textile Museum Collection with works by contemporary fashion designers returning to more responsible uses of materials and resources.



## About Katrina Orsini

Katrina Orsini is a textile historian and educator. She is currently the program associate for academic engagement at The George Washington University Museum and The Textile Museum. She has been with the museum since 2021, with a special focus on research and curriculum for the George Washington University and the wider academic community. She teaches the course SUST 2005: Responsible Fashion in GW's Sustainability Program and has published on sustainability pedagogy in museums. Orsini is the Fine Curator of *Source Material: Lessons in Responsible Fashion*.

## Kumikimo Braiding: From Traditional to High-Tech

Makiko Tada, artist and researcher in braiding, Japan

Of the 4,000+ fragments at the Cotsen Center, nearly a hundred are examples of innovative textiles from Japan. Many of these textiles draw upon Japanese textile traditions and techniques. Such innovative Japanese textiles and methodologies will be explored with Makiko Tada's braided works and her creation of a new 3-D *kumihimo* machine that can create high tensile strength composite materials.



### About Makiko Tada

With her deep understanding of braiding—from historic Peruvian to traditional Japanese techniques—Makiko Tada has worked on reconstructions of *kumihimo* from archaeological finds, uses of *kumihimo* as a reinforcement of composite materials, and invented new tools to create *kumihimo* while popularizing this craft amongst a new generation of braiders. Supported by the Japanese government, Dr. Tada developed a new 3-D *kumihimo* machine to braid a reinforcement for advanced composite materials that have higher tensile-bending-torsional strength than conventional ones. She has published numerous books, such as *2500-year History of Kumihimo*, and a series of books on various traditional Japanese *kumihimo* techniques.

## Strip Cloth Reimagined with Upcycled Denim

*Nkwo Onwuka, designer and founder of NKWO Design, Nigeria*

The conservation of natural resources and the environment—NKWO Design’s core values—will be discussed. This will be demonstrated through an exploration of “THE PHILOSOPHY OF LESS,” wherein low impact, limited edition, and one-off pieces are created from post-consumer textile waste, locally sourced natural fibers, and upcycled denim.

### About Nkwo Onwuka

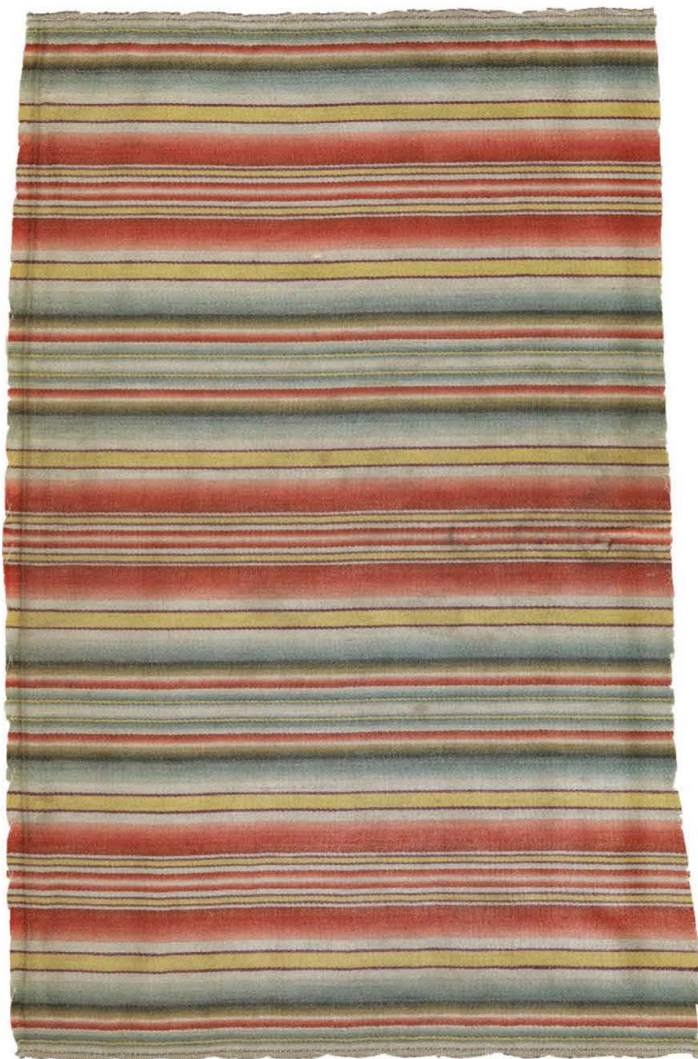
Nkwo Onwuka, a seasoned sustainability expert in the Nigerian fashion industry, is the founder of NKWO Design in Nigeria. Onwuka founded the brand in the United Kingdom in 2007 as a call to action to address the lack of adequate waste management systems in Nigeria, as well as the fact that many of the local artisans are the last in their line of craft. She turned this challenge into an opportunity to bridge the gap between textile waste reduction and traditional craft skills preservation by experimenting with waste as a resource. NKWO won the 2007 Phoenix Award presented by the Mayor of London’s office in conjunction with the V&A Museum.



## Rejuvenated Fibers from Textile Waste and Renewable Energy in Textiles

*Abhishek Bansal, Head of Sustainability for Arvind Limited, India*

Abhishek Bansal will speak about his work for Arvind Limited and the promotion of a circular economy for textile manufacturing. Water conservation, waste-to-energy and renewable energy, and recovering post-consumer waste for textile use are key initiatives for Arvind Limited and will be highlighted in this presentation.



### About Abhishek Bansal

Abhishek Bansal is the Head of Sustainability for Arvind Limited, an industry leader in promoting the use of rejuvenated fibers in fashion apparel and accessories. The company has partnered with PurFi; both organizations have a shared common value system with a commitment to addressing textile waste and advancing sustainability goals. Prior to his work for Arvind Limited, Abhishek worked in the Sustainability & Environmental Consulting domain for more than ten years. Abhishek holds a master's degree in Environment & Sustainability Management from NITIE, Mumbai.

## E-Textiles

*Stephen Beeby, Professor of Electronic Systems & Device,  
University of Southampton, England*

This presentation's theme will be on the engineering and use of electronic textiles, otherwise known as e-textiles, and their manufacturing and sustainability. Key topics will include smart printable materials and e-textile wearables in healthcare.



### About Stephen Beeby

Stephen Beeby is a pioneer of electronic textiles, also known as e-textiles, and is a member of the Smart Electronic Materials and Systems and the Centre for Flexible Electronics and E-Textiles (C-FLEET) research groups. Beeby's research interests are focused on the application of flexible electronics, smart printable materials, and energy harvesting technologies to electronic textiles (e-textiles). He has over 400 publications, two of which are the report, "The role of e-textile wearables in healthcare," from 2025 and "Heterogeneous e-textiles: materials, manufacturing and sustainability" in 2024 for *Advanced Materials Technologies*. Beeby holds a prestigious Royal Academy of Engineering Chair in Emerging Technologies on the topic of e-textile engineering.

## The Viability of Bio Materials for Fashion

### Projects

*Charlotte McCurdy, designer and researcher, educator at Stanford University, Palo Alto, California*

The use of grown biological materials for fashion projects and the viability of such biological material in real-life applications will be discussed in this presentation. McCurdy will speak about the intersection of climate change and materials for textile use and fashion.



### About Charlotte McCurdy

Charlotte McCurdy researches and teaches design at the intersection of climate change and materials at the Stanford University “d.school” in Palo Alto, California. McCurdy is focused on using grown biological materials for fashion projects and her work has been featured in *The New York Times*, *The Guardian*, and *Vogue*. Her work has been internationally exhibited, most recently at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the London Design Museum, and the Cooper Hewitt Triennial. McCurdy holds a degree in Global Affairs from Yale University and a degree in Industrial Design from the Rhode Island School of Design. Awards McCurdy has won include the “Sustainability Innovators, 25 for 2025” award issued by The Design School; the “2025 Grum Visiting Artist” award issued by The Williston Northampton School; and the “2024 Eco Conscious Emerging Tech Designer of the Year 2024” award issued by the Technology Innovator Awards.

## Embroidery, Craft Heritage, and Women's Autonomy

*Karishma Swali, Creative Director of Chanakya International and Founder & Chairperson of the Chanakya School of Craft, Mumbai, India*

Karishma Swali will be hosting a discussion on the Chanakya School of Craft in Mumbai, India, where she serves as the Artistic Director. Key topics will include embroidery, craft heritage, and women's autonomy.



### About Karishma Swali

Karishma Swali is the Creative Director of Chanakya International and the Founder & Chairperson of the Chanakya School of Craft in Mumbai, India. Through her Mumbai-based export atelier, Swali promotes the preservation and revival of some of India's finest textile craft traditions and ornamentation techniques, merging India's historical craft traditions with modern innovation. Swali is committed to innovation, integrating rapid prototyping and computer-aided design with traditional craft workflows. Her high-end collaborators include the couture labels Christian Dior, Fendi, Gucci, Prada, Valentino, and Lanvin. Swali graduated from India's National Institute of Fashion Technology and holds a master's degree in Business Administration from the Narsee Monte Institute of Management Studies.

## Conscious Velvet: Tiziano Guardini and Bevilacqua Reimagine Tradition

*Tiziano Guardini, Conscious Creative Director, designer, and co-founder of the Guardini Ciuffreda studio, Italy*

Key topics will include conscious design, eco-fashion, and sustainability. Guardini will speak about his designs and his research into special materials that are sustainable and cruelty-free, with a strong focus on Italian artisanal traditions and craftsmanship. Guardini will also delve into his experience with Tessitura Luigi Bevilacqua, an artisanal weaving workshop in Venice that produces fine fabrics and handcrafted *Soprarizzo* velvet still made on original 18th-century looms.



### About Tiziano Guardini

For designer Tiziano Guardini, the idea that “ethics and aesthetics represent the essential combination” is of utmost importance. Guardini infuses his approach to fashion, “ECOuture,” into all of his designs. For his first exhibition in 2012 in Altaroma, Guardini created a “pine needle” jacket. This was followed by a 2014 invitation to be a guest for the United Nations’ event, “Fashion for Forest and Forest for Fashion.” In 2017, Guardini won both the “Franca Sozzani GCC for Best Emerging Designer” award and the “PETA Couture Award.” Since 2019, his designs have been shown in the official calendar of Milan Fashion Week. Guardini founded the Guardini Ciuffreda studio alongside designer Luigi Ciuffreda in 2020 in Milan, Italy. Guardini studied at the Koefia Academy in Rome, obtaining the title of Fashion Designer.

## Timeless: Textile Traditions, New Ideas, and Experiments

*Hector Manuel Meneses Lozano, Director of the Textile Museum of Oaxaca*

Hector Manuel Meneses Lozano will be speaking about how the Museo Textil de Oaxaca (the Textile Museum of Oaxaca) supports textile artists in Mexico through workshops and mutual learning experiences, is a central location for materials, and functions as a site for promoting textile products, amongst other things. A key theme to this work is sustaining textile artists across Mexico.

### About Hector Manuel Meneses Lozano

Since 2012, Meneses Lozano has been the Director of the Museo Textil de Oaxaca. He studied Conservation and Restoration at the Escuela Nacional de Conservación, Restauración y Museografía “Manuel del Castillo Negrete” in Mexico City. His undergraduate thesis, based on a feathered textile of the late 17th century, helped recreate a textile technique that had, until then, been nearly vanished. He also hosts workshops in collaboration with spinners, dyers, weavers, and embroiderers.



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## Design

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## Image Credits

**Cover:** "Paper Roll" textile sample, Reiko Sudo for Nuno Corporation, Japan, 1990. Cotsen Textile Traces Study Collection T-1327.\*

**p5:** Painted chain mail purse, Whiting & Davis, United States, c. 1920s-1930s. Cotsen Textile Traces Study Collection T-2036.\*

**p6:** Woven belt with tassels, Makiko Tada, Japan, early 21st century. Cotsen Textile Traces Study Collection T-2360.\*

**p7:** Embroidered boy's vest, Mali, mid-20th century. Cotsen Textile Traces Study Collection T-0876.\*

**p8:** Furnishing, Netherlands, late 18th century-early 19th century. Cotsen Textile Traces Study Collection T-0945.\*

**p9:** "Fireworks" textile sample, Junichi Arai, Japan, 2004. Cotsen Textile Traces Study Collection T-2319.\*

**p10:** "Reborn," Bamba Masae, Japan, 2009. Cotsen Textile Traces Study Collection T-3018.\*

**p11:** Saddlebag with sequins and beads, Albania, 19th century. Cotsen Textile Traces Study Collection T-2982.\*

**p12:** Garment fragment, Mariano Fortuny, Italy, c. 1900-1925. Cotsen Textile Traces Study Collection T-2301.\*

**p13:** Textile sampler, Mexico, 18th century. Cotsen Textile Traces Study Collection T-1431.\*

\* Photos by Bruce M. White Photography