

Costume and Research in Finland

National-level research seminar on Costume Design and related field

A meeting of researchers based in Finland!

Friday, June 3rd 2016 at 9.00 – 17.30
Room 5022, 5th floor
Arabia Campus
Hämeentie 135 A (main building)
00560 Helsinki

The seminar is organized by:



Costume in Focus
Research Group
Department of Film, Television, and Scenography
School of Arts, Design and Architecture
Aalto University



The seminar is part of the Costume Methodologies research project within the Finland Distinguished Professor Programme (FiDiPro) funded by the Academy of Finland.

FIDIPRO

Finland Distinguished Professor Programme



**ACADEMY
OF FINLAND**

Reviewers - Respondents

Donatella Barbieri

Senior Research Fellow Design for Performance
London College of Fashion, University of the Arts London

Paula Hohti, PhD

Assistant Professor, History of Art and Culture
Department of Art, Centre for General Studies, Aalto University

Peter McNeil, PhD

Professor of Design History and Associate Dean (Research)
University of Technology Sydney, Australia
Finland Distinguished Professor (FiDiPro)
Department of Film, TV & Scenography
Aalto University

Sofia Pantouvaki, PhD

Professor of Costume Design for Theatre & Film
Department of Film, TV and Scenography, Aalto University
Seminar Chair

Programme

9:00-9:30 Welcome & Introduction

Session 1

Chair: Sofia Pantouvaki, Professor of Costume Design for Theatre & Film, Aalto University

9:30-10:00

Tua Helve, MA, Doctoral Candidate in Costume Design, Department of Film, Television and Scenography, Aalto University, FiDiPro Costume Methodologies project

Costume design in Finnish contemporary dance 2000–2015: Outlooks on collaboration processes and costume outcomes

10:00-10:30

Maarit Uusitalo, MA, Doctoral Candidate in Costume Design, Department of Film, Television and Scenography, Aalto University

Gustaf III (1746 - 1792) a costume designer, actor and playwright. A presentation of stage costumes from the Gustavian era

10:30-11:00 Coffee break

Session 2

Chair: Peter McNeil, Professor of Design History, University of Technology Sydney

11:00-11:30

Tiina Ikonen, Doctoral candidate, University of Helsinki, Department of Teacher Education, Craft Science

How to tell about the Estonians' past to Finnish spectators through costumes – the formation and the roles of the costumes of the play 'Purge'

11:30-12:00

Kirsi Manninen, MA, Doctoral Candidate in Costume Design, Department of Film, Television and Scenography, Aalto University

Digital Drawing on Virtual Paper - Pixels Controlled by the Costume Designer's Hand

12:00-12:30

Nadia Malik, MA, PGCHER, FHEA, SBTD, Lecturer BA(Hons) Costume with Textiles and Doctoral candidate, The University of Huddersfield, UK

The Pedagogy of Costume Design: an investigation into past, present and future practice

12:30 – 13:30 Lunch break (lunch offered at the Arabia Restaurant)

Session 3

Chair: Joanna Weckman, Post-doctoral Researcher in Costume Design, Aalto University

13:30-14:00

Elisa Avikainen, MA student in Education, Textile teacher, University of Helsinki

The many dimensions of circus costume – Kirsi Manninen as costume designer in the Winter Circus
(presentation in Finnish)

14:00-14:30

Janne Renvall, MA in Costume Design, Department of Film, Television and Scenography, Aalto University

What makes the difference in costume design for contemporary dance? From the point of view of the pieces ‘Colour, colour’ and ‘PLAY’ and a costume designer

14:30-15:00

Amita Kilumanga, MA in Costume Design, Department of Film, Television and Scenography, Aalto University

Race as Costume - The Challenges and Choices that a Costume Designer faces when designing a Representation of the “Black Woman

15:00-15:30 Coffee break

Session 4

Chair: Paula Hohti, Professor, History of Art and Culture, Aalto University

15:30-16:00

Joanna Weckman, Post-doctoral Researcher in Costume Design, Aalto University, FiDiPro Costume Methodologies project

Touching the Past – Work in Progress

16:00-16:30

Johanna Oksanen-Lyytikäinen, Visiting Researcher, Costume in Focus research group, Aalto University

Costume designer as a powerful practitioner - Crocheted linen masks for non-verbal theatre

16:30-17:30 Conclusions and Discussion

Session 1

Tua Helve, MA

Doctoral Candidate in Costume Design

DEPARTMENT OF FILM, TELEVISION AND SCENOGRAPHY, AALTO UNIVERSITY,
FIDIPRO COSTUME METHODOLOGIES PROJECT

Costume Design in Finnish Contemporary Dance 2000–2015: Outlooks on Collaboration Processes and Costume Outcomes

Abstract:

By investigating the costumes and their production processes in the field of contemporary dance in the years 2000–2015, the aim of my doctoral research project is to answer the following questions: What are the visual and other characteristics of costumes for contemporary dance in Finland in the 21st century? With what means can a costume convey a meaning to the spectators? What are the processes behind the costume design decisions that have led to certain outcomes? The main methods are visual and interview analysis. Following the hermeneutic approach, the emphasis is on qualitative dissection.

The preliminary findings indicate that there is high variation in the design processes, yet certain aspects recur: collaborative, often un-hierarchical artistic teams, high commitment to the production in question and a clear vision that the work is made for the spectators appear as common characteristics. This presentation combines elements from these remarks, and focuses on the analysis of the intertwined relationship between costume outcomes and preceding costume design practices. By conceptualizing knowledge traditionally possessed by the professionals in practice only, I intend to offer viewpoints to understand both the costume design process and the impact of the different types of collaboration on the final costumes.

Biography:

MA Tua Helve is a doctoral candidate at the Department of Film, Television and Scenography at Aalto University School of Arts, Design and Architecture. She is currently working in the frame of the Costume Methodologies research project. Tua's doctoral dissertation focuses on costume design for contemporary dance in Finland. Her research interests cover a whole spectrum that links costume and dance. She is a visiting lecturer in Finnish universities, mainly focusing on the history of dance costume in the West; costume design for dance; and supervising BA and MA students. Tua is a member of the Costume in Focus research group.

Session 1

Maarit Uusitalo, MA

Doctoral Candidate in Costume Design

DEPARTMENT OF FILM, TELEVISION AND SCENOGRAPHY, AALTO UNIVERSITY

Gustav III (1746-1792) a Costume Designer, Actor and Playwright. A Presentation of Stage Costumes from the Gustavian Era

Abstract:

Gustaf III (1746 – 1792), the King of Sweden, was influenced by theatre from a very young age. His mother, Queen Lovisa Ulrika was the founder of the first court theatre *Confidencen* in Stockholm in 1753, where Gustaf III made his first stage appearance at the age of 3. In addition to being an eager performer, Gustaf III also wrote plays and designed costumes. He developed outdoor tournaments into theatrical performances and as an example of this, a *Savage's* costume, worn by his brother Karl, still exists in the Royal Armoury archives. Gustaf III's passion for theatre and costumes is documented in the Royal Opera house and its wardrobe department in Stockholm, which he commissioned to build in 1772. Twenty years later, he was assassinated in this same building during a masquerade ball. The amount of masquerades, operas and plays increased dramatically after Gustaf III's death, however, the Gustavian era left unique examples of costume history for scholars to examine. The aim of this paper is to present theatre costumes from the Gustavian era and Gustaf III's costume designs for operas and plays, examined in the Royal Opera and the Royal Armoury archives in Stockholm. Furthermore, this paper discusses where the Gustavian theatre costumes were worn later on after the first stage appearance, as many signs of modifications are visible in the costumes.

Session 2

Tiina Ikonen

Doctoral Candidate

UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI, DEPARTMENT OF TEACHER EDUCATION, CRAFT SCIENCE

How to Tell About the Estonians' Past to Finnish Spectators Through Costumes – the Formation and the Roles of the Costumes of the Play *Purge*

Abstract:

During the last decade Finns have familiarised themselves with Estonia's history through non-fiction, fiction and drama. Sofi Oksanen's novel *Purge*, which tells the story of three Estonian women during and after the soviet era, has been an important work dealing with Estonia's recent past. Oksanen's play *Purge* was, however, the first work to tell the story of *Purge* to the Finns. The objective of this presentation is to discuss how the costumes of the play participated in the storytelling and playing the characters. This will be done from the viewpoint of the costume designer, director and the actors of the play. The costumes are an interesting part of the play, because the soviet era changed drastically the Estonian society, culture and clothing. The play was linked to Estonia's history through its dialogue and programme. The starting point of costume design was that the costumes would manifest the soviet era and its impact on the characters. The main means to tell about this was the use of familiar emblems, clothes and colours. Manifestation of the characters themselves or of being an Estonian through costumes was instead less obvious and indirect. Some costumes were modified due to the bodily and mental feelings they evoked in the actors.

Biography:

Tiina is a doctoral student of craft science at the Department of teacher education at the University of Helsinki. Her doctoral thesis deals with the costumes of three adaptations of Sofi Oksanen's novel *Purge*, a play, an opera and a film. She is interested in the various possibilities and functions of stage and film costumes.

Session 2

Kirsi Manninen, MA

Doctoral Candidate in Costume Design

DEPARTMENT OF FILM, TELEVISION AND SCENOGRAPHY, AALTO UNIVERSITY

Digital Drawing on Virtual Paper - Pixels Controlled by the Costume Designer's Hand

Abstract:

The costume design working methods are changing. The working process can begin at the same time in several different locations and countries. Digital drawing as a new method will modernize sketching and ease communication within the design team.

My doctoral dissertation explores digital drawing on virtual paper and the ways in which costume designers utilize digital drawing in their sketching process and communication. In this context, the virtual paper means the touch screen. My hypothesis is that digital drawing will aid designers to overcome the phobia of blank "paper" and will make it easier to start costume sketching.

As a part of the research process I have organized several Digital Drawing workshops for designers and design students in Finland and abroad during the years 2013 –2016. To collect necessary information of the changing ways of the costume designer's sketching processes, I utilize the methods of interviewing and observing the designers participating in my workshops.

Biography:

Kirsi Manninen is a Finnish scenographer and a Doctoral Candidate at the Aalto University School of Arts, Design and Architecture. Her long career as a costume designer includes over one hundred design works for television, theatre and film. She has experience with various forms of theater: drama, comedy, circus, dance, shadow theater, black theater, puppetry, Beijing opera, ice dance, mask theater and multimedia. She is a member of the Costume in Focus research group at the Aalto University. The topic of her doctoral study is Digital Drawing on Virtual Paper from the costume designer's point of view. She teaches digital drawing for costume design students, as well as professional colleagues in Finland and abroad. She is a member of Costume in Focus research group.

Session 2

Nadia Malik, MA, PGCHEP, FHEA, SBTD

Doctoral Candidate, Lecturer BA(Hons) Costume with Textiles

THE UNIVERSITY OF HUDDERSFIELD, UK

The Pedagogy of Costume Design; an investigation into past, present and future practice

Abstract:

My research is an investigation into the theory and practice of education in costume design. In locating and tracking its history and emergence as a distinct practice, a comprehensive collection of information regarding the evolution of costume teaching aims to establish and recognise this practice as a valuable and significant part of the wider field of costume inquiry, itself presently considered to be in its nascent stage. Alongside the historical grounding, a global overview of current costume design teaching practices, supported by case studies, aims to determine and establish signature pedagogies for costume design within the wider framework of art & design pedagogy. This research will therefore include design practice and teaching practice project work, cyclically analysed and applied to personal teaching methods, in order to cross-inform both and raise the profile of costume in industry and academia through personal and graduate working practices. Recent changes in UK schools education policy together with government intended reforms to UK Higher Education demonstrate a diminishing focus on and regard for the value of arts education by the UK government. I intend to monitor the application of these policy changes and their implications for costume pedagogy into the future. In essence, this thesis aims to map the genesis, current practices and future potentials of costume design education with the purpose of determining how to render the overall subject of costume more visible and valued in academia and the performance industry.

Biography:

Nadia Malik is a Lecturer on the BA(Hons) Costume With Textiles course and a doctoral candidate in costume research at the University of Huddersfield. She has designed for stage and screen, exhibited in group exhibitions and taught at various UK universities over the last 15 years. Her research interests lie in the pedagogy of costume design and collaborative approaches to performance devising through costume design.

Session 3

Elisa Avikainen

MA in Education, Textile teacher

UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI

The Many Dimensions of Circus Costume – Kirsi Manninen as a costume designer in Winter Circus

Abstract:

The main interest of Elisa Avikainen's MA study was scenographer Kirsi Manninen and her career as a costume designer for the Winter Circuses of Hurjaruuth. The purpose was to describe the costume design processes and to find out what possibilities and challenges circus sets for costume design. The study is a qualitative case study. Material for the study was gathered with a theme interview. Material was analyzed with content analysis. The study was more designer - than production - oriented. The focus of the analysis were not the themes and details of circus productions but rather the design and artefacts behind them.

The study shows that the design process of Manninen proceeds iteratively between four different dimensions. As a result, a model describing the circus production design process of Manninen was created. The dimensions were named as team, user, substance and composition. A costume designer is working as a part of a multi-artistic team, creating the performance in co-operation. The theme of the play defines the guidelines for the work. Each costume is designed individually for a performer. Costumes and the substance transmit different moods and messages. Also, they have a role as a storytelling part of the play. The final costume and the composition of it are formed by the color, shape and material, applying different techniques.

Biography:

Elisa Avikainen graduated as a Master of Arts in the field of Education at the University of Helsinki in 2016. She is working as a textiles teacher.

Session 3

Janne Renvall

MA in Costume Design

DEPARTMENT OF FILM, TELEVISION AND SCENOGRAPHY AALTO UNIVERSITY

What Makes the Difference in Costume Design for Contemporary Dance? From the point of view of pieces *Colour, colour* and *PLAY* and a costume designer

Abstract:

Janne Renvall's MA thesis engages in a costume design activity within two contemporary dance performances: while the experiences in *Colour, colour* served as an initiative for the investigation process, *PLAY* became one of the main methods in this practice-based research. As the other significant method was conducting interviews among the audience and team members of *PLAY*, the thesis brings into dialogue and interprets the material produced through the interviews, the shared knowledge from the collaborative artistic practice, and the knowledge provided by the chosen source books. Thus, the approach of the study could be defined as interpretative hermeneutic phenomenological.

The aim of the investigation is to have further understanding of dance costumes and finding answers to the conflict in the world-making between the artist-researcher as a costume designer – who is used to what the thesis has called the aesthetic paradigm – and *Colour, colour* as an example of what within the process was called the ontological paradigm of dance.

When redefining the concept of costume as performative together with its materiality, which appears within an interaction between the partakers of a performance brought forth by costuming as an enactment of both a costume and a performer, the thesis renders costume as ephemeral costumeness that constantly renews itself depending on the context and the person who perceives.

Biography:

Janne Renvall completed his Master of Arts degree in the major of Costume Design this spring at Aalto University. Renvall studied Clothing Design at the University of Applied Arts in Helsinki (precedent to Aalto University) in 1983 – 1988. Ever since he has worked as a designer-craftsman-entrepreneur, as a costume designer and also as a lecturer of fashion and making of clothing. Renvall has earned Specialist Qualification in Dressmaking.

Session 3

Amita Kilumanga

MA in Costume Design

DEPARTMENT OF FILM, TELEVISION AND SCENOGRAPHY, AALTO UNIVERSITY

Race as Costume

– The challenges and choices that a costume designer faces when designing a representation of the ‘black woman’

Abstract:

Amita Kilumanga’s MA thesis investigates how the concept of race and ‘blackness’ has become a socially constructed costume in its own right through the use of stereotypes, resulting in blackness becoming a ‘wearable costume’. This is accomplished by conducting a comparative analysis of historical and contemporary examples of how blackness has been portrayed in the performing arts. By examining how racial attributes, features and characteristics have been used as part of the costume designers design tool in order to create a stereotypical representation of a black woman the thesis investigates how race has become a wearable identity for the character. Based on these findings the author also discusses her own subjective experiences of designing for a production called the Crowning Glory in London 2013 and how her design choices affected the performers in the show.

Biography:

Since graduating in 2003 from Central Saint Martins in Theatre Design for performance, Amita Kilumanga has worked on a number of productions as a costume designer, associate costume designer and design assistant in Finland, England and Tanzania. While working as a freelance costume designer, she finalized her MA studies in 2016, in Costume Design, at Aalto University, School of Arts, Design and Architecture in Helsinki, Finland.

Session 4

Joanna Weckman

Post-doctoral Researcher in Costume Design

DEPARTMENT OF FILM, TELEVISION AND SCENOGRAPHY, AALTO UNIVERSITY, FIDIPRO COSTUME METHODOLOGIES PROJECT

Touching the Past – work in progress

Abstract:

When investigating the history of the costume design profession and production process, literary and even visual sources like photographs of the production facilities and employees can be very scarce. This presentation introduces a post doctoral research project discussing the ways in which extant costumes can be used as research material. Through exploring extant film and theatre costumes in Finland, and moreover, a practice-based case study concentrating on the work in the costume departments of two major film companies in Finland prior to the 1960's, this project aims at developing new methods for the costume research. The introduced project is a part of the wider Costume Methodologies project funded by the Academy of Finland and executed at the Aalto University during the year 2016. This presentation will introduce the progress and the current outcomes of the project.

Biography:

Joanna Weckman, Doctor of Arts, is a researcher, curator, lecturer and a costume designer. She currently works as a postdoctoral researcher at the Department of Film, Television and Scenography, at the Aalto University School of Arts, Design and Architecture. Her dissertation in 2015 investigated the conditions – the practices, values and ideals – that shaped the work of costume designers in recent Finnish history, through the career of and oral history told by the actress and costume designer Liisi Tandefelt. She has published several articles on the history of costume design work and of costumes for the stage and film. Her latest publication *Unelmien kuteita – epookkipukujen historiaa Suomessa* (2015) is a book about the history of period costume for the Finnish stage connected with a costume exhibition at the Theatre Museum in Helsinki. She is a member of Costume in Focus research group.

Session 4

Johanna Oksanen-Lyytikäinen

Visiting Researcher, Costume in Focus research group

AALTO UNIVERSITY

Costume designer as a powerful practitioner - Crocheted linen masks for non-verbal theatre

Abstract:

A practical need for developing theatre masks that are more user friendly than masks made of leather, papier-mâché or plastic, led me to two research themes that partly intertwine together. One focus of my research is the crocheted linen masks as objects and the other focus is the masks as working tools of the actors².

Combining free crocheting technique with unprocessed linen yarn allows producing theatre masks that are light, see-through, breathable and adjustable for the actor's face. This technique also creates a versatile surface for the mask, which gives the mask liveliness that reacts for example to the actor's movements and the stage lights. All the masks made of crocheted linen are unique because of the varying¹ features of the natural material and the technique that adjusts to almost any shape.

As a working tool of the actor, theatre masks contribute to the creation of the characters and can function as the basis of the characters created. The expression and the appearance of the mask affects the actors' idea of how the character moves, acts and reflects on the others on the stage. For young actors a mask can also function as a shield that releases the actor of feeling insecurity on the stage.

In my presentation I will introduce the masks as concrete objects, the first impressions of the actors' and the director's experiences of the masks, and reflect my own artistic practice as research material.

¹For example the varying thickness and the thread of the yarn affects the final result even if the amount of stitches is the same.

Biography:

PhD Johanna Oksanen-Lyytikäinen is currently working on postdoctoral research as a Visiting Researcher at the Department of Film, Television and Scenography, Aalto University School of Arts, Design and Architecture. Johanna's doctoral dissertation in the field of Craft science Puku taiteena ja työvälineenä. Näyttämöpuvun merkitys kolmessa oopperaproduktiossa [Costume as Art and as a Tool. Stage costume in three different opera productions] (University of Helsinki 2015) investigated the meanings of costume and costume design in different opera contexts from the point of view of the costume designer. She has taught clothing and pattern design several years at the Department of Teacher Education, University of Helsinki. Johanna is also a freelance costume designer in different theatre and opera productions and a craft teacher in several institutions of adult education. She is a member of the Costume in Focus group.

