

31st CIETA General Assembly and Congress
23-26 September 2025
Museo del Traje, Madrid
New Directions in the Study of Historical Textiles

Call for Papers

The study of textiles and dress has expanded considerably over the last few decades, embracing research approaches and methods from a range of disciplines: they include anthropology, archaeology, art history, conservation practice and science, and the histories of techniques and technology, of art, craft and design, of culture, economics and society. The themes broached have been similarly broad and probing, touching on multiple aspects of textile production, dissemination and consumption, from the preparation of raw materials to the making and recycling of garments or furnishings. They have accordingly examined many aspects of human experience and many meanings attached to different object types.

This conference seeks to contribute further to sharing and developing innovative forms of analysis relative to familiar and unfamiliar textile objects and traditions, including the intersection between textiles and dress. Papers are invited that address topics such as developments in recent historiography, globalisation and sustainability, trade and commerce, work and leisure, religion and secularity, gender and race, the senses and emotions, conservation, curating and collecting, or sit within the ongoing quest for more nuanced understanding of the impact and significance of technical analysis in local and transnational contexts. It is hoped that researchers from a range of backgrounds and institutions, including museums, universities and laboratories, will offer their differing expertise to fruitful cross-disciplinary discussion and consideration of the future of the field.

The theme of the conference, New Directions in the Study of Historical Textiles, will complement the exhibition being held at the Museo del Traje (Dress Museum) in Madrid, which will host the conference, reflecting on the historiography of dress and textiles, recent developments in the field, and promising futures. Madrid is home to textile collections that reveal Spain's heritage and represent diverse cultures and peoples.