

RCDF

RESEARCH COLLECTIVE FOR DECOLONIZING FASHION

DEAR READER,

Before you know it, weeks, months and a season have passed and it is time for another RCDF Newsletter. We are very excited to announce that our monthly **Conversations on Decoloniality and Fashion** have started, gathering a dedicated community of regular participants as well as inspiring guests like Walter Mignolo, Sandra Niessen and Rolando Vazquez. For those who have missed it, you can find the recordings and inspiring written reflections on the **RCDF** website. You can still join us by registering [here](#).

Furthermore, after nearly ten years, the Collective is finally transforming into a formal structure, being the **RCDF Foundation** registered in the Netherlands. This will finally allow us to implement a more (financially) sustainable way of operating and compensate for the many hours of hard work put into the RCDF activities. For this, we have some very inspiring and motivating people joining the team, but more on this in the next newsletter.

Editorial Team

Angela Jansen
Ellye Van Grieken
Mi Medrado
Nana Sharif-Korsgaard

Team

Sarah Cheang
Erica De Greef
Shayna Goncalves
Angela Jansen
Nana Sharif-Korsgaard
Mi Medrado
Kat Sark
Toby Slade
Ellye Van Grieken

CONT.

In order to cover the (legal) costs of the creation of the Foundation, we are organising an online three-day **Fundraiser** event on 9-11 July 2021 and of course we are counting on the community to support us in this challenge. We honestly cannot believe how we have managed all these years to organise conferences, workshops, think tanks, events and publications without any structural funding or financial support. It only shows how dedicated our team of voluntary academics, creatives and activists is to the message of disrupting Eurocentricity in contemporary fashion discourse and practice.

Furthermore, we have news from our Hubs as well as some interesting publications, exhibitions, podcasts, courses and calls to share. We are happy to welcome the **Fashion Liberation Collective North Africa**, founded by Nada Koreish. The *Moda e Decolonialidade: Encruzilhadas do Sul Global* (Fashion and Decoloniality: Global South Crossroads Collective) is working on the very first **RCDF Zine** on “Decoloniality and Fashion in Brazil.” The **Decolonial Summer School** will organise its 12th edition in June 2021 on “Learning to Unlearn: Living, Knowing, the University and the Museum” in collaboration with the Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven and registration is now open.

We hope you enjoy this newsletter.

The RCDF Editorial team



NEW AND NOTEWORTHY

CONVERSATIONS ON DECOLONIALITY AND FASHION

Our monthly online Conversations on Decoloniality and Fashion have started with three very stimulating and thought-provoking Conversations so far. Each session, people from different parts of the world have been joining us to share their personal and unique takes on decoloniality and its convergence with fashion.

As a virtual space beyond institutional, disciplinary and geographical boundaries, the Conversations is a way to experiment with other ways of knowledge-creation and sharing in regard to fashion – through conversation, through the communal, and through a diversity of voices across age, race, gender, education, discipline and geography.

We have had the pleasure of welcoming some very inspirational guests like Walter Mignolo and Sandra Niessen to talk about their writings and generously share their knowledge and experience with us. For those of you who have missed it, recordings and written reflections are available on **RCDF website**, as well as the programme for upcoming Conversations and guests.

REFLECTIONS: DECOLONIAL FASHION PRACTICE

Following the Conversations, Shayne Gonçalves has written two inspiring and deeply personal Reflections:

‘For me, practicing decoloniality then is a constant process of re-learning and delinking from words that force my body and mind into a mould that conforms to these external terms of progress, modernity and success, such as: being professional, being modest, being humble, being sober/drunk/high, being thin, being nice, controlling my emotions, and not taking things personally in the workplace. These are words that require a double suppression from people of colour – to at once be the word, and to forget the things that make us colour-full in fulfilment of the word. To be professional is to speak English and to forget another vernacular language. To not take things personally at work is such that when a white male colleague makes an office-wide announcement that ‘Black Lives Matter is irrelevant’ we need to respect the rules of not discussing race and politics in the workplace and hence assimilate into eurocentric norms that silence all other voices for whom the statement feels like an attack on our very personhood.’

RCDF FOUNDATION

After nearly ten years, the Research Collective is finally formalising its structure through a Foundation registered in the Netherlands. This will finally allow us to implement a more (financially) sustainable way of operating, to compensate the many hours of hard work put into the RCDF activities and to apply for grants, receive donations, membership contributions and fees for our activities.

Guided by the ideas of inspiring decolonial thinkers, the Foundation's main aim remains to reveal and permanently question the inherent coloniality of contemporary fashion and its eurocentricity. Through our conversing, organising, lecturing, teaching, curating and writing, we aim to address the silencing and erasing of voices—in and outside modernity—in our collective efforts to create a truly diverse and globally interconnected network of sovereign fashioning systems. We aim to expose obscured intersectional forms of discrimination, erasure and exploitation within contemporary fashion. In the words of Rolando Vazquez, to witness the destruction of cultural diversity, is to face a radical reduction of roads into the future. By addressing these issues, we aim to activate a truly transformative movement for an environmentally and culturally sustainable, ethical and socially just fashion-sphere.

The Foundation will consist of a Supervisory Board, an Executive Board, an Advisory Board and an Editorial Team and we are looking forward to introducing the the Foundation and its board members during the RCDF Fundraiser in July.

RCDF FUNDRAISER

On 9-10-11 July 2021 we will be organising a three-day online Fundraiser event to raise funds for the (legal) expenses of the creation of the RCDF Foundation. In the course of three days, we are planning inspiring conversations with exciting 'star' guests, round table discussions gathering decolonial thinkers and doers and a selection of short fashion film projections from around the world, followed by a Q&A with some of the makers.

We hope to motivate the community to support and enable us to continue this experimental platform that we started in 2012 to critique the denial and erasure of a diversity of fashioning systems. Registrations will open soon and donations will be voluntarily depending on individual means.

The Fundraiser will also be the occasion to launch the very first RCDF Zine, guest-edited by our Brazil-hub The Moda e Decolonialidade: Encruzilhadas do Sul Global, with a special issue on "Decoloniality and Fashion in Brazil."

- Cheang, Sarah, De Greef, Erica and Takagi, Yoko (eds.) (2021 forthcoming) **Rethinking Fashion Globalization**. London: Bloomsbury. *Rethinking Fashion Globalization is an edited collection that draws together original, diverse, and richly reflective critiques of the fashion system from both established and emerging fashion scholars, researchers and creative practitioners. The volume is divided into three key themes, 'Disruptions in Time and Space', 'Nationalism and Transnationalism' and 'Global Design Practices' that re-map fashion's origins, practices and futures, to present alternatives for reclaiming and rethinking fashion globalization in the 21st century.*
- Sark, Katrina (ed) (2021). "Ethical Fashion and Empowerment," **Special Issue of Clothing Cultures**. Intellect. Vol.7, No.1.
- Sark, Katrina (2021). "**Editor's Introduction: The Fashion Paradox.**" Ethical Fashion and Empowerment, Special Issue of Clothing Cultures. Intellect. Vol.7, No.1.

NEWS FROM THE HUBS

NORTH AFRICA

EGYPT - We are happy to introduce the **Fashion Liberation Collective North Africa** (FLCNA), founded by Nada Koreish. The Liberation Collective was created to compensate a lack of 'native' texts, knowledges, opinions and documentation due to the colonial and post-colonial histories of North Africa. Because local histories have been erased and merged into 'one oriental fantasy,' it is the Collective's mission to (self-)represent the north Africa region. First by taking steps towards a decolonial fashion practice, that researches, analyses and reconnects with local histories. They aim to bring to light the 'true' North African representations in art and design. By owning and rewriting the gaps in local histories, addressing the issues and creating a place for North African creativity, they truly hope to provide a wealth of material for design and creative student's of the region. The FLCNA aims to provide a platform for North African creatives to self-represent their heritage and showcase their work, by using their vast network of local workshops and makers.

NORTH AMERICA

Canada - The **8th annual Canadian Fashion Symposium** is scheduled for September 2021, but due to the COVID regulations, they will be focussing on new collaborative ideas to expand their open-sourced online resources and to continue developing their online projects to benefit fashion educators, students, curators, designers, and other professionals. Last year, they co-designed the **Digital Working Groups** resources (on decoloniality, sustainability, cultural appropriation, etc.), which have been a great success with fashion institutions, university libraries, and museums. This year, they would like to expand on this project and are asking for collaboration ideas and proposals. Please contact Kat Sark if you wish to collaborate. Please contact **Kat Sark** if you wish to collaborate.

SOUTH AMERICA

BRAZIL - The Moda e Decolonialidade: Encruzilhadas do Sul Global (Fashion and Decoloniality: Global South Crossroads Collective) is working on the very first RCDF Zine, which will be on **Decoloniality and Fashion in Brazil**. Stay tuned for the Zine event launch date!

BRAZIL - The **Colóquio de Moda** will take place on 9 September - 10 October 2021 and the Call for Papers is now open.

BRAZIL - **South-Orienting Fashion: Clothing Production and Decoloniality** working group coordinated by Carla Costa, Heloisa Heloisa de Olivera Santos and Mi Medrado as debater welcome proposals (in Portuguese, English and Spanish) that challenge Brazilian fashion from established discourses focusing on ways to decolonize it. The deadline for abstract submission is 21 May 2021.

BRAZIL - **Afro-Brazilian Fashion and Activism** working group coordinated by Lino do Santos, Maria do Carmo Paulino and Natália Rosa as debater is seeking proposals that engage in decolonial perspectives and intersectionality between race, class and gender, intertwined with political manifestations, urban and traditional cultures. The deadline for abstract submission is 21 May 2021.

BRAZIL - "**O Vestuário como assunto: perspectivas de pesquisa a partir de artefatos e imagens**" (Dress as Subject: Research Perspectives Based on Artifacts and Images) is a publication edited by Alliny Maia Cabral, Indyanelly Marçal Garcia Di Calaça and Rita Morais de Andrade. It is from **Coleção Desenredos da Faculdade de Artes Visuais**, Universidade Federal de Goiás and organized by Grupo de Pesquisa Indumenta: Dress and Textiles Studies in Brazil.

PUBLICATIONS - EXHIBITIONS - EVENTS - COURSES

PUBLICATIONS

- **Tiina Seppälä, Melanie Sarantou and Satu Miettinen (eds.)**(forthcoming 2021). **Arts-Based Methods for Decolonising Participatory Research**. London: Routledge. *This edited volume is an effort to transform the ways in which colonial power relations and Eurocentric knowledges are reproduced in participatory research. This forthcoming publication explores whether and how it is possible to use arts-based methods for creating more horizontal and democratic research practices. In discussing both the transformative potential and limitations of arts-based methods, the editors have compiled a range of contributions that explore what arts-based methods can contribute to decolonising participatory research and its processes and practices. The need to decolonise research, and investigate practical contributions of arts-based methods in the practice-led research domain, this compilation welcomes and discusses the role of artistic research in depth, locating it within decolonising contexts.*
- **Gaurav Monga (2021)**. **Costumes of the Living**. London: Snuggly Books. *This book functions less as naked commentary on contemporary fashion than as a sartorial taxonomy of the human system and its emotional minutiae. Through a series of shifting sketches, fragments and confessional monologues, identities are modified or exchanged, the living are transformed into the dead, the past and the present change places, space becomes time and time becomes spatialized, clothes become bodies and bodies clothes; familiar garments stand revealed as extended physiologies and carriers of sympathetic magic. You can read Gaurav's fashion poems [here](#) and [here](#).*

(ONLINE) RESOURCES

The Fashion and Race Database has been developing in exciting ways across various spaces on its online platform. With the aim to center and amplify the voices of those who have been racialized (and thus marginalized) in fashion, the online platform's goal is to illuminate under-examined histories and address racism throughout the fashion system. As a global effort that involves racialized participants as well as non-racialized allies, this platform provides hands-on research and publishing opportunities to students, scholars and writers both concerned with—and invested in—dismantling racism and bringing critical stories to light. Take a look at the Library, the most popular and widely-used section of the Fashion and Race Database, where countless sources have been collected and organized in one place. This multifaceted repository is a great reference for educators, students and curious minds, that provides an expanding selection of tools for learning about all matters connected to fashion, appearance and race.

(ONLINE) JOURNALS

Out of Stock is an artistic-research project that poses as a journal, from an eastern-european sensibility. Focusing on speculative thinking and wanderings, it asks questions about the contemporary significance of fashion and design and their ability to become 'rebellious agents' for imagining (future) scenarios. It does so through the lens of Eastern-European perspectives and sensibilities, as ways to fall apart and fall together. Initiated by (unprofessional) fashion theorist and art writer Edith Lázár in collaboration with Ana Labudović – designer and printer-publisher n00b – the project has set itself to become a playful platform for experimental ideas and forms of writing, thinking, and sensorial imagining. ng 'nothing to wear' but ready to dress up the future - all from an eastern-european sensibility.



PODCASTS

- **Chic Podcast** - hosted by Kat Sark is back for a second season. This season, Kat continues her critical conversation on decoloniality, sustainability and ethics in fashion education and the fashion industry with fashion scholars and professionals.
- **Fashion Africa Now Podcast** ignites interesting conversations with designers, creatives, historians, researchers, fashion players and industry experts on what fashion in Africa is today, systematically digging into its past and more importantly, shaping its future. Meet Beatrace Angut Oola, founder of Fashion Africa Now and our F.A.N Podcast host. With strong credentials in fashion and the arts, working for some of the world's esteemed fashion brands, our Ugandan-German host is also a speaker, curator, guest lecturer and founder of a creative consulting agency, APYA Productions. Beatrace ignites and stewards candid and untold stories of talent from Africa and the diaspora, as well as those shaping the sustainable fashion scene.
- **Salón de Moda** is a fashion studies podcast in Spanish that was born out of the collaboration between Parsons alumni from Paris and New York City . The purpose is to spark conversation around the critical discussion of fashion in Latin America. The overall aim is to bridge the gap between the fashion industry and academia. The five hosts are **Camila Abisambra, Laura Beltrán-Rubio, Sandra Mathey García-Rada, Jennifer Varela Rodríguez and Melissa Zuleta Bandera.**

EXHIBITIONS

- **Voices of Fashion. Black Couture, Beauty and Styles** is set to open to the public at the Centraal Museum, in Utrecht, the Netherlands on 01 May 2021. This major new fashion exhibition will be the first ever staged by an art museum in the Netherlands to query the white gaze as the default vantage point from which to present, wear and collect fashion. Underpinning the exhibition are years of research by black, brown and white people that show that the fashion world and our relationship with it continue to be shaped by the legacies of European colonialism. Voices of Fashion takes you on a little told story of fashion, with a stunning exhibition design by Afaina de Jong of AFARAI. RCDF members Angela Jansen and Erica de Greef have each contributed essays in the exhibition catalogue published by the same title.

- **United Fashion Festival** imagines and initiates a different future for fashion. A future in which we're all, both industry and consumers, hungry for less and better. United Fashion is carried out by a cluster of European fashion support associations, and initiated by MAD Brussels Fashion and Design Platform. We aim at enhancing the culture of fashion designers across Europe to be more business minded and at enhancing their competitiveness internationally, without limiting their creativity. Through a number of international network events and transdisciplinary training workshop, more than 150 fashion designers will have the opportunity to participate by showcasing their collection, getting to know and understand several European markets, developing new skills in fashion tech, sustainable fashion, production, craftsmanship, business models. The United Fashion Festival is an exhibition that uses the power of fashion to confront the visitors – whether they are outsiders or experienced professionals – with their understanding of the clothes they wear every day. From 1st April to 6th June '21.

PROJECTS

STREETWARE is an art project that challenges fast-fashion by transforming discarded textiles into prêt-à-porter and creating “Social Sculptures.” Part and parcel of STREETWARE’s ethical concept of creating sustainable norms is the de-colonialisation of everyday life through visible diversity. This approach goes beyond textiles and fabrics, to consider modes of thinking and kinds of behaviour. Is discarded clothing a metaphor for a society that peels itself out of its skin in search of alternative economic and moral systems? Current challenges to humanity – environmental protection, the pandemic, immigration and discussions about the repercussions of colonialism, to name but a few – negate our notions of what can be taken for granted. We are then confronted, each and every one of us, with our own frailties.

- **A Practice of Decolonial Thinking: Feminism, Antiracism & the Life Work of Ochy Curiel** is a conversation that will take place on Monday, May 10, 2021, 12:00 PM (Pacific Time). It focuses on Ochy Curiel's living practice and legacy of realizing questions out in the world, questions that engage the concepts of decoloniality, world building, and landscapes of freedom across Abya Yala and Turtle Island. Together, Aisha Finch and Jennifer Uribe will pursue a black feminist practice of interpretation from Spanish to English, exploring Curiel's many years of work as a feminist and antiracist activist in Colombia and the Dominican Republic.
- **Reorienting Cultural Creativity: The Making of African Fashion Studies** convened by the **Transcultural Exchanges and Network** research strand of London Metropolitan University's hub **CREATURE**, on Thursday, May 20, 2021, 12:00PM (GMT), is a series on the tactics of resistance in institutionalised establishments and postcolonial processes of globalisation. In an attempt to add new prospects and visions to the existing set-up of art and culture, the series redresses the balance for an actor-oriented approach. Co-hosting with London Metropolitan University's BAME Network through **Black History 365**, CREATURE brings together **African Fashion Research Institute** (AFRI) for a discussion on the development of a decolonial focus for African fashion studies. AFRI co-founders Erica de Greef and Lesiba Mabitsela will present a range of projects that aim to decolonise curricula and archives, address erasures and stereotypes, and explore the possibilities and affordances of the digital.
- **'The Cultural Heritage of the Nusantara Creative Process'** is a four-part webinar series put on by the Babaran Segaragung cultural centre in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, together with Meet the Makers, an Indonesian artisan group. The series is sponsored by RCDF to draw attention to meaning systems in traditional clothing. The series focuses on the thought worlds of artisanal producers, in UNESCO terms, 'intangible cultural heritage.' There are two remaining webinars in the series, one on 20 May and one on 17 June 2021.

COURSE

The Decolonial Summer School (22 June 2021 - 08 July 2021), organised by Walter Mignolo and Rolando Vázquez since 2010 to bring together students, activists, scholars and artists in the academic setting to address the dangers of a single story in the Modern/Colonial world order, invites to learn about the decolonial option. Participants and lecturers collectively explore creative alternatives to global (un)justice by critically engaging local histories to challenge global designs. Under this year's theme "Learning to Unlearn: Living, Knowing, the University and the Museum," the online course will discuss the coloniality of knowledge, aesthetics and spirituality, areas of experience managed and controlled by major Western institutions. The seminar will be devoted to exploring decoloniality as a praxis of reconstitution, of re-existence and the re-encounter with the communal.

CALLS FOR FOR PAPERS, CONTRIBUTIONS, FUNDING

PAPERS

- **Re-Imagining Global Fashion Business: New Models, Values and Ideas** is an inter-disciplinary (online) conference on 22-23 July 2021 and organised by Coventry University London in association with the Fashion Research Network. Keynote Speakers are Patsy Perry (Manchester Metropolitan University, UK), Marco Pedroni (University of Ferrara, Italy), Socrates Karadis (Coventry University London, UK). Deadline for abstract submission is Friday, 30th April 2021.
- **Dress and Body Association Conference 2021: Defining the Contours of Dress Studies**. The Dress and Body Association invites submissions for the organization's second annual conference, which will be held on October 29-30, 2021. Consistent with our long-term goals for inclusivity and sustainability, all activities will be 100% online, including keynote speakers, research presentations, and opportunities for virtual networking. Deadline for abstract submission is 2 July 2021.
- The **Fashion Research Network** always has relevant Calls for Papers.

CONTRIBUTIONS

- The **Revue d'Etude Decoloniale** is looking for contributions for their issue on 'De la théorie à la pratique: Abya Yala/Caraïbes/Afrique/Europe/Asie'. Proposals can be sent in French, Spanish, Portuguese and English before 30 May 2021 by email.
- The Editorial Team of **The Critical Pulse** online magazine, based at the University of Southern Denmark, is looking for contributions (critical essays of 5 pages, shorter reviews of 500 words, original photography and artwork) and for new members to join their editorial team. You can contact them through Facebook or by email.
- The **RCDF website** is always looking for blog post contributions from its members and invites everyone to contribute around 500 words on their thinking, opinions, practices, writings, or activities. It is a way to stimulate and share important conversations on decoloniality and fashion. Please feel free to submit your posts by email.

EDITORSHIP

Because we would like the RCDF Zine to represent the diversity of our community, we welcome all members to submit proposals for a special issue of the RCDF Zine. Please let us know about your interests, practices, concerns, colleagues and community, as well as your planned events and activities. Use the form to submit your ideas.

FUNDING

“Negras Crioulas e a moda brasileira” [Creole Women and Brazilian Fashion]. Cynthia Mariah is a stylist and independent African-Brazilian fashion researcher who has been researching Brazilian untold fashion histories. Such as Creole Women in the 18th and 19th Century and their important contributions to Brazilian fashion design. Her research aims to unveil Brazilian fashion histories that have been epistemically denied, and that is why her research needs your financial support.

MEMBERSHIP

Help us expand the community on decoloniality and fashion and join the Research Collective for Decolonizing Fashion. You can fill out the **RCDF Membership Form**.

THANK YOU FOR BEING PART OF THE RCDF COMMUNITY