

TEXTILES AND APPAREL NEWSLETTER

Contents

Announcing

New York with an Apparel Designer's Eye 1

Engaging Youth

Plants & Textiles at Cornell Plantations

TXA at the NYS Fair

Fall 2005 Workshops 2

Concerning Consumers

Just Old Fashioned Soap and Water 3

Exploring Fabrics

Mirror Mirror on the Fabric 4

Emerging Technologies

Nonwoven Wipe for Removal of Contaminants 4

Announcing

New York with an Apparel Designer's Eye

FRAN KOZEN

A group of 23 Cornell apparel students recently visited New York City for a two-day study tour, accompanied by two faculty members. The trip included industry visits to increase student knowledge of the real world, visits to museums, innovative independent designers, and private couture collectors to stimulate students as they create their own designs, and shopping at Garment District fabric and trim stores. If you have a strong interest in apparel, you might want to take a look at New York from an apparel designer's perspective next time you are there.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art Costume Institute generally has a special exhibit in place. The current exhibit, Rara Avis, displays accessories collected by Iris Barrel Apfel, and is in place through January 22, 2006. (<http://www.metmuseum.org/home.asp>)

The Museum at the Fashion Institute of Technology, 7th Ave. at 27th St., has a special exhibit on fashion and textiles from the Netherlands in place through December 10, and they have a new permanent exhibition opening mid-November. (<http://fitnyc.edu/asp/Content.aspx?menu=FutureGlobal:Museum>).

The Cooper Hewitt Museum, 5th Ave. at 91st St., has an exhibit on "Extreme Textiles" up until October 30, and then December 9-March 22, an exhibit from Japan explores color as a design element through 300 years of Western fashion. (<http://www.cooperhewitt.org/>)

The SoHo and Nolita areas of New York are home to many small, independent design entrepreneurs, who sell what they make directly or items they design and have manufactured. Most of the shops are small, and each designer tends to have a specialty. It might be western apparel, shoes, handbags, Tibetan-inspired apparel, or some other niche. These designers are often very innovative, and often command premium prices for their products. A list of some of those retailer/designers is enclosed with this newsletter. Most are open until at least 7:00 at night.

The Garment District in New York was the traditional center of apparel manufacturing. Much of the actual garment production has moved elsewhere, but it is still the center for design offices and many services for the industry. There are exciting fabric and trim shops that sell wholesale to the garment trade, but will sell direct to consumers. They might not be neat and organized like your neighborhood fabric store, but they have amazing fabrics that you have probably never seen before. They will have fabrics currently in the stores, imported fabrics, an amazing array of trims, buttons, beads, etc. A list of some of those places is inserted, as well. Have fun!

ENGAGING YOUTH

Plants & Textiles at Cornell Plantations

CHARLOTTE COFFMAN

Ninety students from Homer Jr. High School visited Cornell on October 21. Some studied Japanese art at the Johnson Art Museum while others spent the morning at Cornell Plantations weaving mats, one of the activities in Plants & Textiles — A Legacy of Technology
<<http://www.hort.cornell.edu/plantsandtextiles/>>



Earlier this fall, Lori Bushway, Horticulture Department, led mat weaving at Judy's Day, a hands-on program that honors the work of Judy Abrams. Judy's Day is celebrated at the Cornell Plantations on a fall weekend and the activities are also extended to schools. This year's theme was grasses and grains. Past themes have included corn, fibers, and underground. Check out ideas and lesson plans on Judy's Day website
<<http://www.plantations.cornell.edu/education/judysday.cfm>>

TXA at the NYS Fair

CHARLOTTE COFFMAN

The 2005 New York State Fair drew more than 960,000 visitors. A good portion of those passed through the UPromise Youth Building/4-H to view exhibits and try hands-on activities. Many thanks to the 4Hers and 4-H volunteer leaders who led these four TXA-based programs.

TXA Program	Counties
Fabric/Flight Connection	Suffolk and Essex
In-Touch Science	Yates, Westchester, and Wyoming
Plants & Textiles	Livingston, Delaware, and Wayne
Simple Gifts	Oneida, Otsego, and Herkimer

Fall 2005 Workshops

CHARLOTTE COFFMAN

This fall, TXA and Cornell Cooperative Extension staff are traveling all about the state to offer a variety of workshops.

Fabric/Flight Connection

Date	Location	Leader
11-05-05	Finger Lakes Leader Forum Geneva, NY	Charlotte Coffman

Go Figure!

Date	Location	Leader
10-1-05	NE 4-H Science, Technology, Engineering Forum, Ithaca, NY	Charlotte Coffman Beth Herget

In-Touch Science

Date	Location	Leader
9-30-05	NE 4-H Science, Technology, Engineering Forum, Ithaca, NY	Lori Bushway Charlotte Coffman
10-03-05	St. Martin de Porres School Poughkeepsie, NY	Pam Castro Charlotte Coffman
10-04-05	St Stephen - St Edward School Warwick, NY	Kat Barry Pam Castro Charlotte Coffman
10-25-05	Westchester County	Charlotte Coffman David Greenfield
10-26-05	Westchester County	Charlotte Coffman Nancy Caswell David Greenfield
11-08-05	St. Anthony School Nanuet, NY	Tatiana Stanton Charlotte Coffman

Plants & Textiles — A Legacy of Technology

Date	Location	Leader
10-01-05	NE 4-H Science, Technology, Engineering Forum, Ithaca, NY	Charlotte Coffman Beth Herget

Textile Arts & Science

Date	Location	Leader
10-29-05	American Chemical Society, Chemistry at the Mall, Ithaca, NY	Annelies Heidekamp Charlotte Coffman TXA students Volunteers

CONCERNING CONSUMERS

Just Old Fashioned Soap and Water

CHARLOTTE COFFMAN

As cool air drives folks indoors and the flu season approaches, attention is once again focused on staying healthy. Some folks swear by a particular vitamin, food, or workout regimen, but the one thing that we can all do is to frequently and thoroughly wash our hands with soap and water. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) asserts that diligence in hand washing prevents the spread of cold and flu viruses as well as more serious diseases such as hepatitis A, meningitis, and infectious diarrhea.

Hand washing may sound simple, but Americans are not scrubbing up. Results of a recent study, commissioned by the American Society of Microbiology and the Soap and Detergent Association, found that only eight in ten adults wash their hands after using a public restroom. The study, by Harris Interactive, conducted telephone interviews of more than 1,000 adults and observed more than 6,000 people in restrooms at major public locations including Atlanta (Turner Field), Chicago (Museum of Science and Industry and Shedd Aquarium), New York City (Grand Central Station and Penn Station), and San Francisco (Ferry Terminal Farmers Market). Women were more hygiene minded than men with 90 percent of women washing their hands after using the restroom compared with 75 percent of men. Neither gender did what they said they would do. In telephone interviews, an impressive 97 percent of women and 96 percent of men said they ALWAYS washed their hands after using the bathroom.

Although not exemplary behavior, hand washing after using a public restroom garnered the highest scores. The telephone survey showed that cleanliness was even lower in other situations. Only 83 percent washed their hands after using the bathroom at home; 77 percent before or after handling or eating food; 42 percent after petting a dog; and 32 percent after coughing or sneezing. Ugh! Monk, the neurotic television detective who constantly wipes his hands, may have the right idea.

Researchers have observed that even dedicated hand washers may not do a good job. The CDC suggests this routine for getting your hands really clean:

- Wet hands and apply soap.
- Rub hands vigorously together, scrubbing all surfaces. Don't forget back of hands and nails.
- Continue for 20-40 seconds. Some folks sing Happy Birthday or Twinkle Twinkle Little Star to measure 20 seconds.
- Rinse well and dry hands.

You may wonder whether you could speed or improve this process by using some of the new soaps. The highly touted antibacterial soaps are no better at killing germs than ordinary soaps, according to a study by the National Institute of Nursing Research. Primary caregivers from 222 New York City families were divided into two groups. One group used regular soap for one year while the other group used antibacterial soap. Samples from skin surfaces showed no difference in hand contamination between the two groups. Researchers noted that, in fact, all soaps are antimicrobial (not antibacterial), i.e. they affect viruses and bacteria.

One new product, a waterless alcohol gel, is widely recommended for hand cleaning in hospitals. Despite strict regulations for hand washing, not all health-care providers are in compliance. The CDC notes that 2.4 million infections annually are acquired in health-care facilities in the US, leading or contributing to 100,000 deaths. A study involving more than 4,000 patients in French hospitals concluded that the gels are safe and that physicians are more likely to comply with hygiene protocols when using gels. Users simply rub the gel on their hands. No water or towels needed. This method is especially promising for countries lacking a clean water supply. Although available in some US hospitals, gels have not caught on here. Some staff note that although the alcohol kills microbes it does not remove dirt, and it costs more than soap. In the parallel consumer market, the sale of waterless hand cleaners has decreased by about 65 percent since they were introduced in 1997.

Good old soap and water, it seems, is still what the doctor ordered.

References:

1. CBS NEWS. Women More Likely to Wash Hands, September 26, 2005.
<<http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2005/09/21/health/webmd/main874198.shtml>>
2. Surfactants & Detergents. Washing hands Reinforced as Disease Preventive, Inform 15(8): 538. 2004.
3. Watkins, Catherine. Reports of Soap's Death Are Premature, Inform 14 (1): 34-35. 2003.

EXPLORING FABRICS

Mirror, Mirror on the Fabric

CHARLOTTE COFFMAN

For several years, ethnic fabrics have been popular in US clothing and household textiles. One of the most distinctive is *mirrorwork*, a fabric with small "mirrors" attached with embroidery stitches. Also called *shisha* (mirror or glass) or *shisha wor*, or sheeshedar, this technique has been used for more than 300 years to embellish clothing, animal regalia, and interior furnishings in India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan.

Originally, *shisha* were made from hand-blown glass. Those sold as “antiques” are still made in that manner and may have charming bubbles and imperfections. “Antiques” usually have a blue cast and can be washed, bleached, boiled, or dry cleaned. Also available now are mass-produced *shisha* made from machine-rolled glass. These modern versions are labeled “perfect” because they are more uniform and reflective. “Rainbow” mirrors are also machine made, but a chemical surface treatment allows them to reflect colors ranging from pink to amber. Unfortunately, perfect and rainbow mirrors can NOT be washed; they can only be dry-cleaned.

Mirrorwork fabrics and garments can be purchased at boutiques or mail ordered. A quick Internet search revealed more than 1000 websites offering these items.

If you want to make your own mirrorwork garments, you may purchase *shisha* mirrors in several shapes at sewing stores, bead shops, costume supply houses, or via mail order at a cost of \$.30 to \$1.30 each. Again, a quick Internet search revealed at least 500 websites willing to drop your *shisha* in the mail. Magazine staff at Sew News (3) suggested Treadleart www.treadleart.com as a possible source. If you don't have the patience to look for real *shisha*, try using large sequins, metallic tissue lamé strengthened with fusible interfacing, or old CDs (4).

Armed with your fabric, embroidery floss, and sewing machine or needle, you are ready to attach the *shisha* to the cloth or garment. Singer and Spyrou (5) provide excellent illustrations for two traditional methods of attaching the mirrors by hand. Bendel (2) gives clear instructions for two machine-embroidered techniques and one hand-embroidered technique. Richards (4) explains how to attach CDs using machine stitching and the Atkins website (1) shows how to attach mirrors using beads.

Whether you request some mirrorwork from a traveling friend, purchase a garment with *shisha* online, or make your own, this traditional fabric will definitely add a little sparkle to your wardrobe.

References:

1. Atkins, Robin <<http://www.robinatkins.com/tips.html#shisha>>
2. Bendel, Peggy. Mirror Image, Sew News, December, 1999, p 44-46.
3. Klaer, Janet. Making Connections, Sew News, December, 2001. P 84.
4. Richards, Pauline. Reflections, Sew News, December, 2001. P 64-66.
5. Singer, Margo and Spyrou, Mary. Textile Arts - Multicultural Traditions. Davis Publications, Worcester, MA. 2000. P 28-32.

EMERGING TECHNOLOGY

Nonwoven Wipe for Removal of Contaminants CHARLOTTE COFFMAN

Researchers at Texas Tech University have developed a new composite cotton fabric said to protect against biological and chemical agents. The material is composed of a thin piece of carbon surrounded by needlepunched cotton. It is lightweight, soft, and flexible. It appears to be ideal as a wipe for removing contaminants from a variety of surfaces, including human skin. The nonwoven material may also be suitable as a protective liner in hazardous suits or as a large covering to protect unusually-shaped objects. Hobbs Bonded Fibers, a manufacturer of needlepunched nonwovens, has licensed the product and hopes to commercialize it within a few months.

References:

1. Nonwovens Industry, June, 2005. <www.nonwovens-industry.com>
2. Ramkumar, Seshadri, Personal communication, August, 2005.

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