Press kit

**Codes – stories in textiles  
20th ETN conference in in Łódź, Poland, March 02 - 04, 2023**

The European Textile Network (ETN) is a non-profit organisation, bringing together cultural producers (artists, designers, craft people, authors etc.), carriers of cultural heritage and education (museums, archives, libraries, universities etc.), lecturers, researchers, and textile enthusiasts to promote the exchange of information and experiences, to encourage the cooperation in projects and to arrange meetings. Textile conferences are held at regular intervals in constantly changing interesting cities - after a break due to corona, the next conference is just around the corner:

The 20th ETN conference will take place from March 02 until 04, 2023 in Łódź, Poland and will have the motto „CODES - stories in textiles“. A wide range of lectures will illuminate countless stories that are hidden in textiles and reflect the character of different cultures. Contributions from the field of modern textile art, textile handicrafts as well as lectures that shed light on historical or ethnographic aspects can be expected. The conference logo shows the so-called Khipus – knotted cords from the Inca culture in South America. These Khipus were used in times before the Spanish influence to archive various information using knots. During the conference we will hear an exciting talk by researcher Manuel Medrano on this topic.

**Codes: Textiles as carriers of individual and collective stories**

Textiles are more than a piece of cloth made from fibres. Textiles contain codes on many different levels that need to be decoded and lead us into different worlds.

There are textiles that obviously tell a story, as they use the textile medium to capture narratives, e.g. in the form of embroidered or woven images. The Bayeux Tapestry is a wonderful example for this. This embroidery from the end of the 11th century tells the story of a medieval ruler's accession to the throne on a 68-meter-long frieze, almost like a comic. The piece has not only been the subject of research for scientists and historians for a long time, but also a source of inspiration for various artistic reinterpretations. Agnes Richter's jacket, which was embroidered all over with characters and was made in the Leipzig mental hospital at the end of the 19th century, impressively demonstrates the potential of textiles to carry messages and to show individual expression.

If one examines textiles more closely, one can also find many clues about their use, repair, wear and tear, about the history of their materials and trade routes.

Besides these individual stories, textiles can also contain collective codes and can be read as the common language of a tribe, a social class or a specific time, expressed through specific materials, colours or forms. The special symbols in Kyrgyz felt carpets, the colours and shapes of Turkish Oya lace or the meaning of diamond patterns in Moroccan Berber carpets - they all contain codes that tell of belonging, natural phenomena, wishes and dreams and are becoming increasingly rare to decode these days. Dealing with them means getting closer to a culture and looking for ways of understanding.

Associations, memories, and social connotations that we associate with various materials and textile objects are also important sources for finding new forms of artistic expression in the field of contemporary textile art and design. The works of the artist Chunghie Lee, which interpret the Korean patchwork technique of the Boijagi in a modern way, or the fabrics of the Venezuelan artists María Dávila & Eduardo Portillo could not be fully read without these cultural references. Other artists and designers, such as Ewa Latkowska-Żychska, Antoni Starczewski or Aleksandra Gaca, have developed a completely independent, unmistakable signature in their work, which can also be interpreted as a kind of language.

These and many other exciting topics will be part of the conference lectures. You can find information about all the speakers and topics at [etn-net.org/lectures-speakers.html](https://etn-net.org/lectures-speakers.html)

# **Łódź –the city that textile built**

The conference venue Łódźis a traditional textile town in Poland, well known to many people interested in textiles. Wherever you look in Łódź, you can see the brick buildings and large chimneys of a former textile factory. Some have decayed and been returned to nature for the time being. Others, however, have been renovated and adapted by investors and now shine in new splendour. One old factory building hosts a large textile museum, the "Central Museum of Textiles in Łódź", which is also home to the well-known International Triennial of Tapestry.

The exhibition, taking place for almost 50 years, is one of the world’s most important events of its kind, attracting artists and lovers of tapestry from all continents. It is also a review of the most important trends and achievements in contemporary textile art. The event is cyclical, held every 3 years, with its 17th edition this year. The Triennial 2022/23, curated by Marta Kowalewska, shows 56 works selected by an international jury from almost half a thousand submissions from around the world. The competition’s open formula with the main theme “Entangled State” left the artists with a wide field for interpretation and their own explorations in the medium of fabric. The works selected for the exhibition are very diversified, both in terms of form and meaning.  They include works that refer to classical, traditional tapestry or embroidery techniques, as well as installations exemplifying bold experimentation with fabric. Despite these differences, all the works share a common element - the themes addressed by the artists revolve around contemporary problems that affect us all, regardless of our origin, gender, or social position. In this respect, the Triennial has always been a forum for the exchange of ideas and experiences, not only in terms of artistic practice, but also the perception of reality.

The first day of the conference will be spent in the museum, enjoying guided tours through the Triennale, but also through the areas of the permanent exhibition of the Central Museum of Textiles. In addition, lectures will lead all participants into the history and exciting present of this unique textile city.

The next two conference days will be spent at the famous Strzemiński Academy of Art Łódź, which is also a partner of the event. Various speakers in the auditorium will be presenting their approach to the topic "Codes - stories in textiles" from very different angles. The two conference days at the academy will be held as a hybrid event. This means that an on-site attendance will be possible, but participants and speakers may also take part online via Zoom.

### After the 3 days of the conference, the Academy makes its wonderful studios available for post-conference workshops and there is still a lot to discover in the city. Places of interest are urban complex Księży Młyn, the *Muzeum Sztuki* (‘ms1’ with its historical and cultural collections an ‘ms2’ with its worldclass 20th and 21st-century art) and the nearby *Manufakturer* complex - an exemplar of local industrial regeneration. Meanwhile, the 5km long, north-south boulevard of *Piotrkowska Street* – which boasts most of Łódź’s popular atmosphere - is perhaps the heart of this fascinating city. The ETN conference is a unique opportunity to discover this unique place!

More information about the ETN-conference, March 2 – 4, 2023, on site and online:   
[etn-net.org/etn-conference-2023.html](https://etn-net.org/etn-conference-2023.html)