

Short Subjects

World's Largest Sewing Pattern Collection

Database of patterns in a Rhode Island collection available to costumers online

The largest known collection of sewing patterns is housed at the University of Rhode Island. The Commercial Pattern Archive database, CoPA, provides a unique tool for researchers and designers to recreate or date clothing from 1868 to 2000. There are several collections from the States, Canada and the UK represented in the database which functions like a Union Catalog of pattern collections.

The collection includes about 50,000 paper patterns and 62,000 patterns in an online database.

Costume designers can replicate period clothing and the public can understand how middle-class Americans dressed over time. The oldest patterns in the collection are from 1847, including a peignoir and a baby cap. The database can be used to trace the evolution of clothing and reoccurrence of trends.



CoPA includes two major collections of patterns that it received as donations. One is the Betty Williams Collection, donated by Betty Williams, a theatrical costumer in New York City. Betty pioneered research on commercial patterns in the early 1980s. She became a leader in the field, establishing a major personal pattern collection and encouraging others to actively participate in the collection and storage of patterns.

The other is the Joy Spanabel Emery Collection. Emery donated her personal collection of patterns and periodicals to the university years ago and has painstakingly sorted through the donations sent there as word spread about the growing repository. Emery now serves as the curator of the archives.

As a costume designer, Emery began saving paper patterns in the 1980s because everyday clothes often aren't preserved over



Joy Spanabel Emery, curator of the Commercial Pattern Archive.

time. Notable pieces like military uniforms and wedding dresses tend to be saved. She also worried electronic versions of the patterns could be lost as technology changed. Emery was inspired to collect patterns by her friend, Betty Williams

Emery finds the patterns from the 1930s the most interesting because they're elegant and inventive despite the fact they were designed during the

Depression. She's also intrigued by the WWI dress, the "Hoover apron." Women wore it when Herbert Hoover promoted food conservation by encouraging Americans to grow vegetable gardens.

Emery wrote a history of the paper pattern industry that was published in 2014. She gets inquiries from all over the world from people doing clothing research.

The association for performing arts and entertainment professionals, USITT, honored Emery this year for documenting the clothing of American history. Emery received a distinguished achievement award in costume design and technology, the only one given this year in that category.

To learn more about the Commercial Pattern Archive and its database, visit the [CoPA website](http://www.co-pa.org).

Details of Ice Man's Clothing Revealed

5300 year old Tyrolean hunter wore hides from wild and domestic animals.

A new study published in [Scientific Report](#) finds that Ötzi the Tyrolean Iceman, who was discovered on the border with Italy in 1991, wore garments made of a hide coat, skin leggings, fur hat, and hay-stuffed shoes. The decomposition of the leather and fur over thousands of years, had made it difficult for earlier researchers to pinpoint specific animal species for some of the components of Ötzi's wardrobe.

The choice of animals used in ancient clothing – domestic or wild, local or imported – aids in the answering questions about our human past. For example, was clothing worn primarily for utility, or did clothing also reflect the social status of the wearer? Were animal skins selected primarily because of availability, or were certain types of leathers and furs prized for specific qualities?

The new study confirms that Ötzi's leather loincloth and hide coat were "haphazardly" stitched from sheepskin, a conclusion reached by previous studies.



However, genetic analysis now reveals that the sheep species in Ötzi's clothing is closer to modern domestic European sheep than to their wild cousins, and that the articles of his clothing were made from the skins of at least four animals.

Analysis also shows that a part of Ötzi's coat were also made of domesticated goat from a mitochondrial haplogroup (a genetic population that shares a common female ancestor) that still roams the hills and valleys of central Europe today.

Knowing that the coat came from several animals, of at least two species, tells researchers that the Iceman's coat was stitched together, and possibly repaired with, any hides that were handy at the time.

They also found that Ötzi's leggings were crafted from domesticated goat leather, and not a species of wolf, fox or dog as

Left: Reconstruction of Ötzi the Iceman at the South Tyrol Museum of Archaeology in Bolzano, Italy. Photo: South Tyrol Museum of Archaeology



Above: Clothes worn by Ötzi the Iceman 5,300 years ago include (clockwise from top left): hay-stuffed shoes, goat- and sheepskin coat, goatskin leggings, bear fur hat, grass matting and sheepskin loincloth. Photo: Institute for Mummies and the Iceman.

previously thought. Finding that a similar pair of 6,500-year-old leggings discovered in Switzerland were also fashioned from goat leather suggests that the material was deliberately chosen for its specific qualities.

Shoelaces made from cattle from the main genetic population of Europe round out the domesticated species identified by the report on the clothing samples.

Ötzi most likely farmed and herded, but he may also have hunted and trapped wild animals in his alpine region. Genetic analysis, shows that his quiver was made from wild roe deer, while his fur hat was fashioned from a genetic lineage of brown bear still seen in the region today.

The Man Who Dressed Up As His Ancestors

Peruvian artist wears costumes to recreate portraits of his illustrious ancestors

Peruvian artist Christian Fuchs' apartment walls in Lima's are covered with paintings of his European and Latin American ancestors. But a closer look shows that many are photographs of the 37-year-old himself, dressed as his relatives.

According to a story in the [BBC News Magazine](#), Fuchs spent months recreating portraits he grew up with, posing for photographs in reproductions their clothing.

"I grew up with portraits and objects that had been in my family for up to five generations," he explains. "As a child I looked at the portraits and if I didn't know their names, I invented them. I watched them for hours and felt they were watching me back. Eventually that led to my reinterpretations of them."

Reinterpreting his ancestors took many months. Fuchs took photos of their portraits to a local tailor who tried to imitate the garments - some date back to the 18th C. - as faithfully as possible, and to a jeweler who created replicas of the jewelry. Dressing up as a woman can be especially problematic Fuchs says, and not only because he finds the corsets very uncomfortable. "It's complicated because I have to wax," he says, "and I have tons of hair."

See the BBC site for more portraits.



Fuchs's great-great-great-great-grandfather participated in the Peruvian war of independence



Great-great-great-great-grandmother, Luise Friederike Charlotte Eleonora Chee, was his Fuchs' first recreation



Fuchs's great-great-great-great-grandfather Eulogio Elespuru y Martinez de Pinillos lived in Paris for many years

Colleen Atwood Wins First Ever H.P. Costume Oscar

"Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them" first in franchise to be honored for costumes.

Colleen Atwood won the 2017 Academy Award for costume design for her work on *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them*, the first film in the Harry Potter franchise to be recognized for its costumes.

"(T)here's so much incredible kind of artistry in the Harry Potter movies," said Atwood. "I think maybe the fact that in this movie, J.K. Rowling's creation is set in the 1920s, which kind of keyed off a different sort of visual sense, might be the kind of obvious thing, but I can't believe they never won for that incredible clockwork creation of Stuart Craig in the Harry Potter movies."

Atwood previously won in the category for *Chicago*, *Memoirs of a Geisha*, and *Alice in Wonderland*; this is her 12th nomination.



Fantastic Beasts FIDM exhibit. Photo: Philip Gust