

Dejan Sandic, Europeana Fashion - case study on digitizing, aggregating and disseminating Museum content through a network ...

Europeana Fashion is a best practice network conceived and co-funded under the CIP ICT-PSP program and consisting of 22 partners from 12 European countries, including some of the leading European institutions and Collections in the fashion domain. The Partner institutions have formed a Consortium in order to aggregate and provide [Europeana](#) with selected historical and contemporary material on European fashion. A total of more than 700.000 fashion-related digital objects, ranging from dresses and accessories to photographs, posters, drawings, sketches, videos and fashion catalogues will be provided by the Partners.

The Project has a three year duration starting from March 2012 and ending by March 2015.

The **Europeana Fashion** best practice network aims to:

- **Aggregate and harmonize existing digital content** coming from the most important and interesting public and private European fashion collections by then ingesting this fashion-related content into [Europeana.eu](#).
- **Improve interoperability between scattered and heterogeneous collections**, promoting the use of the Europeana Data Model and developing tools, such as a specialized Fashion Thesaurus, to best handle the multilingual nature of the collated content.
- **Provide access to this digital content** through the creation of a dedicated fashion portal that will serve as a specialized access point to heterogeneous fashion collections across Europe.
- **Develop tools and services for the integration of user generated content** that will enrich and complement the standard metadata descriptions and will support the contextualization of the aggregated content through the connection with open content sources like Wikipedia.
- **Actively engage the European fashion community in museums, universities and in the private sector** and raise awareness of best practices involved in digitization, IPR issues and semantic interoperability developed inside the BPN and in the Europeana family of projects.

Europeana Fashion Consortium

Coordinator

Fondazione Rinascimento Digitale (IT)

Technical Partners

National Technical University of Athens (GR)

Internet Architects (BE)

Content Partners

ModeMuseum Provincie Antwerpen (BE)
Victoria & Albert Museum (UK)
Les Arts Décoratifs (FR)
Museo del Traje (ES)
Stiftung Preussischer Kulturbesitz (DE)
Catwalk Pictures (BE)
Emilio Pucci Archive (IT)
Pitti Immagine (IT)
Rossimoda Shoe Museum (IT)
Archivio Missoni (IT)
Nederlands Instituut voor Beeld en Geluid (NL)
Centraal Museum Utrecht (NL)
Nordiska Museet (SE)
MUDE (PT)
Belgrade Museum of Applied Arts (RS)
Royal Museums for Arts and History (BE)
Peloponnesian Folklore Foundation (GR)
Stockholm University (SE)
Wien Museum (AT)

The Museum of Applied Art (MAA) in Belgrade www.mpu.rs/english/index.html is a specialized museum institution in the domain of historical and contemporary Applied Art, Architecture and Design. The Museum is a National institution under jurisdiction of the Ministry of Culture. Its collections and holdings consist of Serbian, as well as, international artifacts.

The process of digitalizing museum content in MAA started a decade ago as a means of enhancing internal operability and has ever since been a perpetual activity executed according to internal standard models.

Typically, digitalization for Museum documenting and archiving is done on a regularly basis by dedicated staff, whilst planned projects and exhibitions within Museum annual programs are opportunities for a more elaborate and expert approach in digitalizing collection content. The process is an ongoing affair that still leaves a lot to be desired. Regardless of the percentage of digitalized content, only a number of selected pieces is externally presented on the Museum website or elsewhere, leaving thus the majority of digitalized content still unavailable to potential audience.

Partner cooperation with Europaena is a welcome option to improve greatly in that respect.

As one of the biggest aggregators of digital content in the domain of culture, Europeana has an immense and still growing user base. Being part of Europeana and additionally having its own specialized portal europeanafashion.eu/portal/home.html, Europeana Fashion builds up on the wide-spread interest generated by the fashion industry engaging a whole variety of users : professionals, enthusiasts, students or laymen world-wide.

The Project itself, conceived as a best practice network in a specialist yet popular field of fashion, sets the prerogatives for a number of activities and solutions within. Aiming for a sustainable web portal transcending the set time frame of the Project, Europeana Fashion includes a diversity of networks, professional and popular. Presenting and promoting a selection of fashion related objects on popular social networks like Facebook, Tweeter, Tumbler, Pinterest or LinkedIn, pushes further the networking aspect of the Project and adds the kind of experience that most user are familiar with. Even more, Museum Curators engaged on the Project, having their own private profiles on some of the mentioned social networks, actually connect personal friend lists to the Project and have a unique feedback on selected posts. Engaging a whole lot of audience that are not by default museum goers, social networking provides for an interesting option in blending the line between academic and populist.

In addition to the portal, Europeana Fashion established its own Blog <http://blog.europeanafashion.eu/blog/>, thus broadening still the scale of various interests involved.

Summing up the networking options of the Project it must be mentioned as well, that the process of communicating and technical organizing amongst Partners has been conducted through Basecamp - a great tool for program managing, that is conceived itself on social networks postulates.

In conclusion - most of the benefits of a partnership in the Europeana Fashion Project were obvious and predicted, but some just imposed themselves seemingly out of the blue, like the social network concept. Bridging the gap between professional and private, expert and poplar, it proved in practice more engaging and stimulating to museum Curators, than anticipated. As digitalizing analogue content is not amongst the most desirable of chores in their daily routine, the fashion thematic of the Project followed up by the social networking framework may prove to be a game changer in future motivating.

Digitalizing and presenting more than 5500 artifacts from four Museum Collections of the Belgrade Museum of Applied Art to Europeana as well as promoting the institution itself will aid in passing on the essential information on Museum holdings to a large number of interested parties. Technically, adopting the Europeana Data Model (EDM) improves the

workflow within existing standard models of digitalization and is an invaluable experience in exporting data on grand scale.

The project will officially end by March 2015, further enrichment of existing data as well as adding new items will continue still, as well as the established Portal, Blog and social networks pages. All of the work, done and still in progress, is financed by the European Commission.

Dejan Sandic, Curator, Head of Central Documentation Department

Museum of Applied Art

Vuka Karadzica 18

11000 Belgrade

Serbia

Tel. + 381 11 2626 841

+ 381 11 2626 494

Fax. +381 11 2629 121

Mob. +381 60 74 64 565

e-mail. dejan.sandic@mpu.rs

MAA web address : www.mpu.rs