Concept to Completion

ARLIS/NA 2018 session *Boundless: Digital Publishing and Online Scholarship*
February 28, 2018

Molly Schoen, Visual Resources Curator
Fashion Institute of Technology
About the Timeline

- Fashionhistory.fitnyc.edu
- Launched February 2018
- Open-access source for fashion history knowledge
- Aims to demystify dress and fashion and bring together disparate resources
Timeline Features

• Entries on objects and time periods through a fashion history lens
  – Artworks
  – Garments
  – Films
• Dictionary of fashion terms
• Century and decade overviews
• Bibliographies / source database
• Blog
Background

- FIT is a SUNY college of art, design, fashion, business, and communications.
- FIT offers majors and minors in History of Art.
- Our HA program is unique in that there are many classes on clothing and textiles, such as History of Fashion Photography, History of Menswear, and Fashion & Impressionism.
- Thus, FIT has many students and scholars available to contribute their research and knowledge of fashion.
Beginnings

• Created by Assistant Professor Justine De Young in late 2015
• Inspired by the Met’s Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History
General Steps

1. Identify potential collaborators
2. Research platform options
3. Begin compiling content
4. Secure funding
5. Build website
6. Launch!
7. Plan for future maintenance and upgrades
Identifying Potential Collaborators

• Reach out to anyone on campus who might have something to contribute
  – Library
  – Writing Center
  – The Museum at FIT
  – Different departments:
    • Fashion & Textile Studies

• Outside scholars as advisors:
  – NYU Costume Studies MA Program
  – Bard Graduate Center for Decorative Arts, Design History & Material Culture
  – Costume Institute, Metropolitan Museum of Art
  – Museum of Fine Arts Boston
Identifying Potential Collaborators

• If partnerships with other departments or institutions prove to be too much, they still may be valuable in the future
  – Idea to employ Illustration and Studio Arts students to illustrate historical dress was too much, but plan to bring them in later.
Researching Platform Options

- See what’s already available / been used at your institution
  - FIT was already supporting WordPress and had relation with WP Engine (a hosting company)
  - FIT Library has an Omeka subscription
  - FIT also uses Google apps (Gmail, Drive, etc.) so Google Sites was an option
Researching Platform Options

• Google Sites selected as temporary platform
  • Very easy to get up and running
  • Easily allowed collaboration between students and profs
• Drawbacks:
  • Limited features
  • Outdated looking layouts, not visually striking
Welcome

The FIT Fashion History Timeline is conceived as both a showcase of FIT student research and writing and as an important contribution to public knowledge of the history of fashion and design.

We recommend you use the Chrome browser for writing and editing your page.

Model Entries:

- Decade overview: 1870-1879
- Term definition: headnet dress
- Artwork analysis: 1884 - John Singer Sargent, Madame X (Virginie Gautreau)
- Garment analysis:
  - 1867 - White pique afternoon dress with block cording
  - 2003 - Roberto Cavalli, SS embroidered denim ensemble

Spring 2017 classes contributing to the Timeline:

- HA 301 - Fashion & Impressionism (Prof. Justine De Young)

2015-2016 classes' contributions to the Timeline:

- HA 344 - 801 (Fridays) - History of Western Costume (Prof. Justine De Young)
- HA 344 - 802 (Wednesdays) - History of Western Costume (Prof. Justine De Young)
- HA 344 - 85A (Thursdays) - History of Western Costume (Prof. April Cahan)
- HA 344 - 85A (Fridays) - History of Mannequin (Prof. Justine De Young)
- HA 344 - 85A (Mondays) - History of Western Costume (Prof. Rebecca Kelly)
- HA 344 - 801 (Wednesdays) - Twentieth Century Fashion & Art (Prof. Louis D Font)
- FT 523 - 58A (Wednesdays) - History of Fashion: 20th Century (Prof. Louis D Font)
- HA 344 - 801 (Fridays) - History of Western Costume (Prof. Justine De Young)
- HA 344 - 802 (Wednesdays) - History of Western Costume (Prof. Justine De Young)
- FT 523 - 581 (Wednesdays) - Fashion History through the Nineteenth Century (Prof. Louis D Font)

For questions about the project or to participate, please contact Prof. Justine De Young (justine.deyoung@fitnyc.edu). For questions about images used in the project, please email us at fashion_timeline@fitnyc.edu

Please read and sign one of the consent forms below if you'd like to participate.

The first form would give you full authorial credit for your work:
Researching Platform Options

• Wordpress selected as final site
  – More customizable and flexible
    • Preexisting themes and plugins
  – More attractive layouts
    • We went with a customizable theme called Magazine Style
  – Large support network in-person and online
Compiling Content

• Entries mainly written by:
  – Undergraduate students in History of Art courses
  – MA candidates in Fashion & Textile Studies

• Rather than writing traditional essays that are seen only by the professor, this allowed students to put their work out there and gain real-world experience.
Educational Opportunities

• Students learned how to:
  – Research materials
    • Print and online
    • Primary and secondary
  – Share and compare sources
    • Collaborative (and growing!) bibliography on Zotero
  – Find and use images
    • Basic editing including making details and diagrams
    • Copyright and attribution awareness
  – Edit the website
    • Students were responsible for their own page layouts on their entries
Keeping it Organized

• How to manage hundreds of entries at various states of completion, from twelve different classes?
  – AirTable
  – Zotero
  – Slack

• Other options:
  – Google Drive
  – BaseCamp
  – Trello
Airtable

• Spreadsheet / database hybrid
• Cloud collaboration service
  – Tracks entries
  – Cross-lists contributors
  –Sortable by:
    • Class
    • Entry title
    • Author
    • Status of completion, etc.
  – Generate needs assessment
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Entry</th>
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<th>Status</th>
<th>Time Period</th>
<th>Link</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
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</table>
Zotero

• Manage and organize citations
• Keeps links together
• Plugin with Wordpress
• Updates automatically, and globally
  – A change on the Zotero site will automatically update anywhere it appears on the Timeline
The dress of the Venetians, 1495–1525

Added By: Justine De Young

Item Type: Book
Title: The dress of the Venetians, 1495–1525
Author: Newton, Stelia Mary
Series: Pasold studies in textile history
Series Number: 6
Place: Aldershot, England
Publisher: Scollar Press
Date: 1988
ISBN: 978-0-85967-735-6
URL: http://www.worldcat.org/oclc/1008457286
Library: ft1.sunconnect.suny.edu:4699 Library Catalog
Call Number: GT964 .N48 1988
Extra: OCLC: 13095992
Tags: 1490–1499 · 1500–1509 · 1510–1519 · 16th century · Costume · HA 344 · History · Italy Venice · Renaissance ·
To be added to Source Database · Venice (Italy) · tagged

Notes and Attachments
- includes index
- includes index
Securing Funding

• Identify big names in arts funding:
  – National Endowment for the Arts (NEA)
  – National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH)
  – Kress Foundation
  – The Knight Foundation

• Contact Grants Office, if applicable

• Consult with colleagues who have won awards
Securing Funding

• Eventually, the Fashion History Timeline was awarded a 2016-2017 Samuel H. Kress Foundation Digital Resources for Art History Grant
  – Funding allowed us to:
    • Hire a Wordpress expert
    • Migrate data from Google Sites to Wordpress
Final website design

• Time and patience were the biggest factors in migrating the FHT from Google Sites to Wordpress

• Other obstacles:
  – Lots of de-bugging
  – Much of the migration had to be done by hand for optimal results
  – No computer science or related programs at FIT made it trickier to know where to turn to when help was needed.
Looking Ahead (or the *Timeline* timeline :)

**Spring 2019:**
- Decade overviews written by experts
- Graduate symposium papers as thematic essays

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**Fall 2018:**
- Add term definitions related to Asian dress
- Continue work on Early Fashion Designer Database
- Accept contributions from beyond FIT

**Fall 2019:**
- Expand coverage of non-western dress and ancient cultures
We need you!

• Sources to recommend?
• Want to write for the *Timeline* or know someone who’d make a great contributor?
• If you have related fashion history news, let us know and we can feature it on our blog
• Other suggestions are also always welcome!
Thank you!

Contact:
Molly Schoen
Molly_schoen@fitnyc.edu

Justine De Young
Justine_deyoung@fitnyc.edu
Image Credits

6- Degas, Edgar, 1834-1917 (French). At the Milliner’s. 1882-1886. Pastel drawing, 40 x 60 cm. Location unknown, formerly Aubert Collection.


