Journal of

Folklore and Education

Dress to Express:
Exploring Culture and Identity

2014: Volume 1

About the Cover Photo: This photo comes from the project featured by Lisa Falk in this issue. Taken by Vanessa, it features Sergio photographing Kiana as a part of the Ha:san Preparatory and Leadership School exhibit *Photo ID: Portraits by Native Youth.* Thirty-eight students participated in a five-week portrait photography project during which they explored the question, "What is identity?," and examined how a photo portrait can be a statement of identity. They considered objects that express identity, studied a variety of portraits, and researched Edward S. Curtis's photographs. They then planned their own photographic self-portraits that they created in a makeshift studio working together in groups of four students.
(See *Photo ID* at http://www.statemuseum.arizona.edu/exhibits/curtis_reframed/student_photo_id/index.php)

Journal of Folklore and Education
A publication of Local Learning: The National Network for Folk Arts in Education

Editors: Paddy Bowman
Lisa Rathje

Design: Lisa Rathje

The *Journal of Folklore and Education* is a peer-reviewed, open-access journal published annually by Local Learning: The National Network for Folk Arts in Education. Local Learning links folk culture specialists and educators nationwide, advocating for full inclusion of folk and traditional arts and culture in our nation's education. We believe that "local learning"—the traditional knowledge and processes of learning that are grounded in community life—is of critical importance to the effective education of students and to the vigor of our communities and society.

The Journal publishes work representing ethnographic approaches that tap the knowledge and life experience of students, their families, community members, and educators in K-12, college, museum, and community education. We intend our audience to be educators and students at all levels and in all settings, folk culture specialists, and other interested readers. As a digital publication, this journal provides a forum for interdisciplinary, multimedia approaches to community-based teaching, learning, and cultural stewardship.

Local Learning
56 East First Street
New York, NY 10003
Paddy Bowman, Director, pbbowman@gmail.com Lisa Rathje, Assistant Director, rathje.lisa@gmail.com

The Local Learning Board:
Betty Belanus, Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage
Amanda Dargan, City Lore
Linda Deafenbaugh, Philadelphia Folklore Project
Maida Owens, Louisiana Division of the Arts
Anne Pryor, Wisconsin Arts Board
Steve Zeitlin, City Lore
Thank you to Kelsey Sherrod Michael and Rosemary Hathaway

ART WORKS.
arts.gov

www.locallearningnetwork.org

Table of Contents

Dress to Express: Exploring Culture and Identity

2014: Volume 1

Introducing the *Journal of Folklore and Education*

by Paddy Bowman and Lisa Rathje, Editors

Folklore—those arts, stories, and traditions shared within groups—inherently involves teaching and learning. This great informal pedagogy passes along the large and the small bits of traditional knowledge that underpin our lives within our various dynamic cultural groups: our beliefs about the cosmos, how we raise our children and practice our professions, what we wear everyday and on special occasions, how we cure hiccups. The *Journal of Folklore and Education* seeks to merge more closely the fields of folklore and education in the belief that engaging in the study of traditional culture enhances self-knowledge, awareness of cultural assumptions and points of view, authentic connections to the local, and critical inquiry.

Teachers and faculty in a variety of learning environments—from classrooms to museums, freshman composition to social studies—will find pedagogically centered inspiration in these pages. The writing that follows challenges us to reconsider the many extraordinary parts of students' everyday lives as portals to discovery and learning engagement. The *Journal of Folklore and Education* seeks to highlight through peer-reviewed articles (lesson-building content) and classroom-ready activities (discussion prompts, worksheets, and ideas for further inquiry) the unique expertise that each person in the room—both student and educator—brings to many topics and research questions.

The theme for the inaugural issue, *Dress to Express: Exploring Culture and Identity*, was inspired by the work of colleagues at the Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage who created an extensive documentation project and youth access program, *The Will to Adorn: African American Diversity, Style, and Identity*. Our *Dress to Express* theme, like *Will to Adorn*, supports young people in the study of dress and adornment as cultural markers—aspects of visual culture through which people communicate their self-definitions, the communities with which they identify, their creativity, their history, and their style. We explore how educational standards are embedded in the reading of diverse "texts" that must be evaluated within specific and situational contexts—"texts" that might look like a scarf, tattoo, or hair braid. We also, perhaps, begin to trouble too-easy definitions of diversity and culture.

How can you use *Dress to Express* in your teaching?

This issue of the Journal presents a variety of ways to tap the theme *Dress to Express* that are just the beginning. Consider other ideas to spark additional topics, for example:

* What are the economics of dress, which range from the family budget to the global fashion industry and includes the recycling of clothing, from hand-me-downs to international industries?

* Where do clothes come from and where do they go? Answering these questions involves science, agriculture, environmental studies, design, math, business administration, advertising, and mass media.

* What is the relationship of costume to performance? How are costumes designed, cared for, and worn? How have costumes changed across time?

* What makes clothing and adornment objects of memory and nostalgia as well as identity? Interviewing people about their memories of special clothing can provide inspiration for writing nonfiction, poetry, and drama.

Dress and adornment embody both the most personal and the most public ways in which we create and express identity. Clothing shields us from heat and cold and protects our modesty, yet its cultural significance goes far beyond basic necessity. Dressing is a daily experience that creates the boundary between the intimate self and the wider world and requires knowledge, techniques, and aesthetics that are not often acknowledged yet hold complex meaning. Children love to play dress-up. Preschoolers choose backpacks that represent gender, favorite superheroes, or beloved characters. Teens avidly follow fashion fads. Brides negotiate the dueling powers of mass marketing and ritual traditions to ensure they are appropriately attired. Fans wrap themselves in team colors, fictional characters' garb, and pop musicians' styles. Occupations require specific types of dress. Families select clothing in which to lay out loved ones who have died. Even angels are portrayed clothed in Western art. Today young people are arbiters and creators of rapidly evolving styles of dress and adornment that drive much of the clothing industry as well as personal style innovation through social networking and mass media.

The cultural significance of dress and adornment extends across time to all situations, the most casual to the most formal. Wearing the "wrong" thing can cause embarrassment or offense. We must weigh utility as well as beauty and consider the mores of our cultural groups when dressing. A poor costume can spoil a performance. Clothing, hairstyles, and accessories in paintings and photographs reveal vital historical and social clues. Assimilating to new communities can mean altering our appearance. The semiotics of dress reveal information that strangers as well as family and friends decode.

The Journal's features suggest topics and directions for the study of dress and adornment that enliven teaching and learning in any setting. Subjects range from decoding dress and adornment in historical and contemporary photographs to learning to document and interview peers and elders in school and community, from classroom activities to theoretical approaches. Authors include folklorists, anthropologists, K-12 and higher education faculty, artists, and museum educators who present model projects, hands-on student activities, worksheets, theoretical concepts, and "idea portals" for easy adaptation. We believe that cross-fertilization among K-12, university, museum, and community-based educators improves pedagogy for all. Although varied, the contributions have in common the aim of giving voice to young people through ethnographic explorations of self, community, and the world.

Sar-to-ri-al (adjective) of or relating to tailoring, clothes, or style of dress.

Within these topics, we notice how paying attention to *sartorial expression* offers an inviting portal to the rich topics that educators must address in their various disciplines. Because dress and adornment carry such deep, complex meaning, they present exciting opportunities for learning across disciplines and age groups. Decoding, documenting, analyzing, and interpreting research on clothing and adornment is engaging and adaptable for any age or setting, teaches important literacy skills, calls upon all the senses, employs a variety of media and modes of inquiry, and renders diversity uniquely and authentically.

We hope that this issue presents our audience a number of different points of entry to *Dress to Express* that prove rewarding, and we want to hear from you! If you adapt any of the activities found in this issue or use ideas as a springboard for a new project, please tell us. We are interested in continuing discussion and featuring student work in future issues that will share lessons learned. Tell us, what does *Dress to Express* mean in your classroom?

Expressing and Reading Identity through Photographs

by Lisa Falk

How do we construct ideas about identity? During the last century photographic imagery has had a big influence on how we perceive people whose backgrounds and cultures differ from our own. More recently, photography has also served as a social justice tool that youth and Native peoples use to establish and express their own identity.

In October 2013, Arizona State Museum mounted *Curtis Reframed: The Arizona Portfolios,* an exhibit of photographs of American Indians made by Edward S. Curtis during the first part of the 20th century. A successful studio photographer, Curtis traveled throughout the western United States to document what he and the popular media of his time considered "the vanishing race"—Native Americans. From 1907 to 1930, he photographed 80 tribes west of the Mississippi, creating 40,000 negatives, films, and audio recordings now housed at the Library of Congress[1].

These stunning portraits have been praised for their beauty and their historical significance but also attacked for being romanticized, colonial, and staged. They are seen both as an incredible documentary treasure and as biased, artistically contrived depictions of Native Americans. The images are, therefore, simultaneously valued and rejected by both scholars and Native peoples.

Most modern viewers who encounter Curtis's photographs see them as beautiful, realistic portraits of Native Americans in the early 20th century. As art historian Fatimah Tobing Rony notes, viewers of images of other cultures, "do not see the images for the first time. The exotic is already known" (1996:6). Curtis's photographs fit the image in viewers' heads of what an Indian looks like. When they learn more about Curtis and about Native life in his time, they might question the validity of the portraits as unquestionable statements of truth. In her book *On Photography*, Susan Sontag urges viewers to think of photographs as "inexhaustible invitations to deduction, speculation, and fantasy." She wrote, "The ultimate wisdom of the photographic image is to say, 'There is the surface. Now think—or rather feel, intuit—what is beyond it, what the reality must be like if it looks this way" (1977:20).

Artemissia, Yaqui, by Artemissia, 2013; Artemissia with "Yaqui matron" by Edward S. Curtis, 1907

But the viewer's bias, as well as how and by whom the photograph is presented, of course, affects that reality. Museum exhibits coupled with extended interpretive programs can help viewers understand this complexity and start conversations about identity, representation, and interpretation. Museums can help facilitate these types of conversations in their interpretive labeling as well as by presenting multiple versions of images in juxtaposition to offer different viewpoints.

To promote a conversation about identity and interpretation around Curtis's work, in October 2014 Arizona State Museum is opening a complementary exhibit, *Regarding Curtis,* consisting of works by Native artists created in response to Curtis's photography. In addition, the museum will mount the exhibit *Photo ID: Portraits by Native Youth*, created as an outreach project related to the original *Curtis Reframed* show. Students at Ha:san Preparatory and Leadership School[2], a charter high school for Native American youth in Tucson, created the exhibit images under the direction of ASM's Director of Community Engagement and Partnerships Lisa Falk with Ha:san's art teacher Koletta Saddleback (Cree). Thirty-eight students participated in a five-week portrait photography project during which they explored the question, "What is identity?," and examined how a photographic portrait can be a statement of identity. They considered objects that express identity, studied a variety of portraits, and researched Curtis's photographs. They then planned their own photographic self-portraits that they created in a makeshift studio working together in groups of four students.

Objects of Identity

Looking at Cultural Markers—objects that reflect a connection to an identity—is helpful when thinking about creating portraits. Koletta Saddleback and I encouraged students to consider choosing an object to include in their portraits. Several chose a basketball and Virginia brought in her sketchpad with the word ANIME inked on it. She wanted to express herself as the anime-style artist she hopes to become professionally. Wendel brought in a gourd rattle that his uncle had made for him, explaining that he used it when singing traditional songs. But when we did the photo session, instead he brought a mask that he had made.

After reviewing the photographs, Koletta wondered about the appropriateness of the mask. So we asked the cultural teacher, a highly respected elder, her thoughts about Wendel's photograph with the mask. She explained that it was not appropriate as it was a war mask and their tribe has not been at war for a long time. She spoke with the student about it and he chose to reshoot using the gourd rattle. Most schools will not have a cultural teacher, but your community holds many cultural experts. Don't be afraid to reach out and ask their advice.

Each student created a series of three self-portraits. The first was made in the style of many of Curtis's photographs in which the subject is wrapped in a blanket or shawl so the viewer sees only the subject's face. To further the reference to Curtis's work this portrait is presented in sepia tones, while the next two portraits are in color. In the second photograph the subject is still covered by a blanket or shawl but is holding the Curtis photograph of someone from his or her tribe. In their third portrait, students are depicting themselves as they would like to be seen today. Their images can be seen in the online version of the traveling exhibit *Photo ID: Portraits by Native Youth.*

In the process of creating the photographs, the students not only learned about photography but also how to question images. They explored expressions of identity and examined their own. Some of their comments collected from short reflective responses to daily writing prompts give insight into their thoughts.

Brayden, Tohono O'odham/Navajo, by Brayden, 2013; Brayden with "Lynx cap" by Edward S. Curtis, 1907

Nixie commented on how covering up a person takes away unique identity. "[It] made me feel kind of weird because I didn't get to express myself and who I am. I felt like a blanket was covering who I truly am…I'm more happy and athletic and creative. Being covered is not me. It was a different me, and when I'm not covered I'm myself and independent."[3]

George found that by embodying a more stereotyped image of an Indian, he could claim his Native identity. "When I was wrapped up I felt like I was being part of my culture. I also felt like I was very respectful. I don't think I look cultural to be honest. It felt like I was a famous Native person with everybody around taking pictures."[4]

Wendel, in contrast, felt that the blankets took away from the subject's true identity. "[The photographs of people covered in blankets] made me feel sad because they are not showing who they are. They need to be proud of where they come from and who they are and what their language is—who they represent."

Timothy enjoyed being able to analyze the historic images and create his own photographs. "It feels fun taking a picture in the different kinds of ways—the past, present, and future—like I'm part of them now."

Timothy and the other students taking part in this project have always been part of Curtis's images whether they were conscious of this or not, or they accepted this outsider's vision of an "Indian" or rejected it. Many non-Indians' ideas of Native peoples are based, perhaps unconsciously, on Curtis's romantic images. Curtis's images, in turn, were influenced by the need to sell them to "a popular audience whose perception of 'Indianness' was based on stereotypes."[5]

The students at Ha:san responded to Curtis's photographs by commenting on his approach and then shedding it to present themselves, still within the confines of a studio shoot. The three different portraits show an interesting comparison, transition, and transformation. In some series, students look more comfortable covered up; in others, they are obviously happier asserting their own image of themselves. George's comments about feeling more "Indian" when wrapped in a

blanket make one wonder how much his self-perception is being shaped by stereotypical and historical images of Native peoples. Interestingly, he appears equally as comfortable in his wrapped portrait as he does in his final one in which he balances a basketball in his hand.

By looking at the students' three photographs side by side, viewers are nudged to think beyond the surface. They are being asked to think about how they interpret images of Native peoples, as well as to consider what images they already hold in their heads and accept without question as truthful statements about Native peoples. The students' photographs, as Susan Sontag urged, invite viewers to reflect upon "what the reality must be like if it looks this way" and to examine the intentions and biases of photographers and subjects alongside their own as viewers.

Arizona State Museum is inviting viewers of the students' portraits to consider how they themselves might like to be depicted in a portrait. A collection of viewers' selfies is being created on Instagram at **#ASMcurtis**. The *Photo ID* exhibit is available to travel. (falk@email.arizona.edu)

Sontag advocated that viewers open their minds when looking at photographs rather than considering them as evidence of what they think they know about the world. She wrote, "Photography implies that we know about the world if we accept it as the camera records it. But this is the opposite of understanding, which starts from not accepting the world as it looks…. The camera's rendering of reality must always hide more than it discloses" (1977:20-1). Her words from 35 years ago still resonate. Viewers need to look at who took the photograph and why, the context in which it is presented and viewed, and what notions we bring to viewing it as we consider how we are reading photographs and making meaning of them. Photographs, and identity, have multiple truths and multiple illusions, which create multiple levels of meaning both to and about the photographer, the subject, and the consumer.

Lisa Falk *is Director of Community Engagement and Partnerships at Arizona State Museum at the University of Arizona. She is also a photographer whose work includes portraiture, travel, and documentary pieces. She is the author of* Cultural Reporter *and principle writer of* Bermuda Connections: A Cultural Resource Guide for Classrooms*, which guide students in exploring and documenting culture and examining expressions of identity. She holds a BA in Anthropology-Sociology from Oberlin College and an MA in Museum Education from George Washington University. Her portrait was taken by her students at Ha:san School.*

Endnotes

1. Edward S. Curtis's photographs: http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/award98/ienhtml/curthome.html
2. http://www.hasanprep.org
3. All student quotes shared from *Photo ID: Portraits by Native Youth*, Arizona State Museum website, January 2014. http://www.statemuseum.arizona.edu/exhibits/curtis_reframed/student_photo_id/index.php
4. George's portrait can be found here: http://www.statemuseum.arizona.edu/exhibits/curtis_reframed/student_photo_id/georger.php
5. Gerald Vizenor quotes Christopher Lyman from *The Vanishing Race* in "Edward Curtis: Pictorialist and Ethnographic Adventurist" (2001) http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/award98/ienhtml/essay3.html#16.

Works Cited

Arizona State Museum exhibits http://www.statemuseum.arizona.edu/exhibits

Sontag, Susan. 1977. *On Photography.* New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux. Accessed online: http://www.susansontag.com/SusanSontag/books/onPhotography.shtml

Tobing Rony, Fatimah. 1996. *The Third Eye: Race, Cinema, and Ethnographic Spectacle*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Classroom Application: Planning Your Self-Portrait

Adapt these questions to suit your students and your curriculum. Conveying self-identity through a photograph, sketch, painting, or collage enriches an array of disciplines and assignments. Introduce self-portraits with a discussion of the students' portraits in the article by Lisa Falk and how your students would represent themselves.

A self-portrait is a visual expression by you about you. What is it that you want to communicate? Start by thinking about yourself. Use these questions to guide your planning.

1. Where do you live? What about this place is special to you? What objects, colors, or background might you use to express your connection to a place?

2. What cultural groups are you part of? Think about a sports team, music group, school club, hobby, religious group, ethnic group, family, or the community where you live. What about one or more of your cultural groups is important to you? How could you express this? What objects, clothes, jewelry, colors, or background might help express this? How can you share them with others without words?

3. What emotions or personality traits do you want to show? What facial expressions will convey these? What body posture (sitting, standing, hunched over, standing tall, head turned sideways, back facing camera, etc.) will show this emotion or trait?

4. Think about what you want viewers to understand about you when they look at your portrait. How do you want them to read your portrait? What do you want them to "get" about you? What emotion do you want people to feel? What attitude do you want them to see? What clues about your life do you want to give viewers?

5. Where would you like to be located within the frame of the picture? From which angle do you want the viewer to see you? (From above often conveys smallness or vulnerability; from below often conveys largeness or power; straight on might convey openness.)

   Straight on, at eye level
   From above
   From below
   From the side

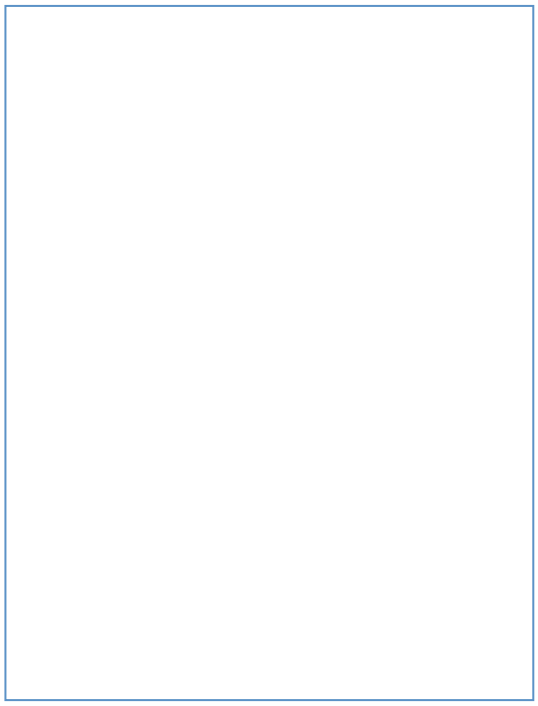
6. Lighting affects the mood of a portrait. What mood do you want to express? What would you like the lighting to be?

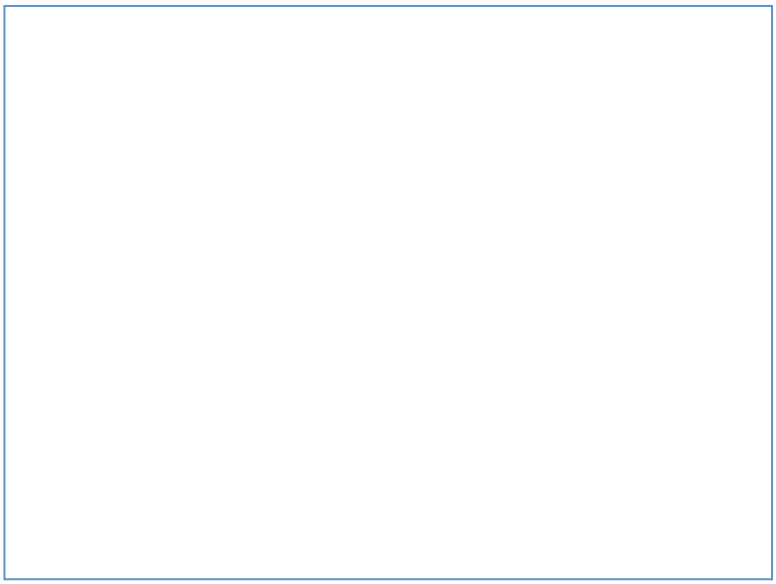
   Mostly dark with a little light
   Equal amounts of light and dark
   Lots of light with a little dark
   Lots of light

7. What artifacts might help convey meaning in your portrait? Make a list of props (objects, photos, fabric, furniture, etc.) that you want in your portrait.

8. How will you dress? How will you wear your hair? Make a list of the clothes and jewelry you want to wear.

9. Will the picture include all of you or be a close-up? Which shape best fits the placement of yourself in the photograph--vertical or horizontal? Try sketching how you want your portrait to look.





10. What title would you give your self-portrait?

This portrait planning worksheet is by Lisa Falk, based on a worksheet by Josh Schacher/Voices Program, 2014.

National Heritage Fellows Portrait Gallery

by Alan Govenar and Paddy Bowman

The annual National Endowment for the Arts National Heritage Fellowships began in 1982 to honor the excellence of folk artists who represent diverse communities throughout the United States. The portraits in this gallery portray artists who have mastered their art forms through years of study with elders and family members. They are also active teachers of their traditions. The gallery features life-sized photographs by folklorist and photographer Alan Govenar. This fall Local Learning will launch a portal featuring Heritage Fellows' portraits on our website as inspiration for learning to make photographic portraits of local masters of traditional arts in students' lives.

Sue Yeon Park, photo by Alan Govenar

Although cultural groups different from our own may appear exotic or hard to understand, all cultural groups share common ways of life that call for ritual, celebration, custom, music, crafts, dance, food, stories and special language—in other words, folklore. Activities in this gallery provide tools to read photographs as text, address cultural assumptions, and discover new traditions and artists.

Traditions are not frozen in time but are alive and part of an ongoing process. To be a master is to be creative. National Heritage Fellows are teachers in their families and communities, passing on their complex, hard-won skills and knowledge.

Below are three websites that creatively present the lives and artistry of this unique group of American master artists.

--Find profiles of all the Heritage Fellows and the webcast of the 2014 concert on the NEA website http://arts.gov/honors/heritage.

--Experience virtual artist residencies with Heritage Fellows on the Local Learning website http://locallearningnetwork.org/guest-artist

--Explore the online *Masters of Traditional Arts Education Guide*, by Paddy Bowman and Alan Govenar, featuring lessons, activities, and multimedia clips of Heritage Fellows. *www.mastersoftraditionalarts.org.*

Alan Govenar *is director of Documentary Arts in Dallas and New York City, and* ***Paddy Bowman*** *directs Local Learning.*

Classroom Application: Reading Portraits

Choose one Heritage Fellow portrait to study carefully. Do not look at the artists' bios yet!

1. "Reading" a photograph is like reading any text. Look closely at the portrait for one minute.

What clues to the artist's life and art form do you see?

What do gesture, objects, clothing, hairstyle, and facial expressions reveal?

What title would you give this portrait?

2. Before reading the artist's bio, answer these questions.

What do you think the artist does?

Where do you think the artist lives?

What clues inform your assumptions?

What do you know about this art form?

3. Read the artist's bio.

What surprised you?

What did you assume correctly?

What did you assume incorrectly?

What questions would you want to ask the artist?

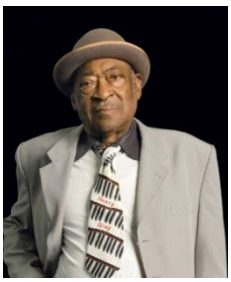
4. Write an exhibition label for this portrait describing how the choice of dress and adornment relates to the artist's cultural identity.

Henry Gray (2006), photo by Alan Govenar

Kamala Lakshmi Narayanan (2010), photo by Alan Govenar

George Na'ope (2006), photo by Alan Govenar

Sue Yeon Park (2008), photo by Alan Govenar



Henry Gray
Blues piano player, singer
2006 NEA National Heritage Fellow
Baton Rouge, LA

Henry Gray was born January 19, 1925. While growing up on a farm in Alsen, Louisiana, a few miles north of Baton Rouge, he began playing piano when he was about eight years old. An elderly woman in the neighborhood, Mrs. White, gave him lessons, and he began playing piano and organ at church. After serving in the Army in the South Pacific in World War II, Gray joined the African American migration from the South to Chicago. In 1968, Gray returned home to Louisiana after the death of his father to help his mother in the family business. While working as a roofer for a local school district and raising a family, he played in clubs around Baton Rouge. Eventually he began recording and touring again, both at home and overseas, playing and singing classic blues covers and his own originals.

Since the 1920s blues musicians have chosen to wear suits and ties in photographs as an indication of their professional stature. Dressing well was a great equalizer for African Americans and even more so for blues musicians, who were often considered to be rough outsiders. Wearing a suit meant a man was determined and prepared for life. In his portrait, contemporary bluesman Henry Gray plays with his name, sporting a dapper gray suit with pleated pants and a black and white piano keyboard tie with his name written in red. His black and white shirt also riffs on the piano motif. Like many blues and jazz musicians, he wears a brimmed hat.

Kamala Lakshmi Narayanan
***Bharatanatyam* Indian dancer**
2010 NEA National Heritage Fellow
Mastic, NY

Bharatanatyam dancers wear highly ornamented costumes that project the spiritual into the material world. Facial expressions and gestures symbolize an idea or emotion. In this ancient dance of south India that remains widespread today, dancers strike dramatic poses and their rhythmic footwork is made audible by an anklet of copper bells. Master dancers like Kamala Lakshmi Narayanan wear more rows of bells since expertise is measured by how little the bells jingle. Makeup, bangle bracelets, earrings, and rings make gestures and expressions more visible to the audience, but for this portrait Kamala Lakshmi Narayanan chose not to wear makeup, making the viewer think more about her costume and gestural movement. In this photo she is demonstrating *Karuna* (compassion or kindness), one of the nine *rasas* (emotions) known as the *navarasas* in Bharatanatyam. Although the costume of bright colors and a contrasting border looks like a sari, which is made from one piece of cloth, it is made from several pieces of cloth.

Kamala Lakshmi Narayanan, born June 16, 1934, in Mayuram, India, began dancing when she was five years old. While growing up in Bombay (now Mumbai), in northern India, she began learning the region's style of classical dance, *Kathak,* whose name means "telling stories." During World War II, her family moved to southern India and she began learning Bharatanatyam, a style that dates back thousands of years and, according to legend, was given to people by Brahma, the creator, as a gift of beauty and happiness during a time of great turmoil. The dance style has been called poetry in motion because of its fluidity and expressiveness.

George Na'ope
Kumu Hula (Hula Master)
2006 NEA National Heritage Fellow
Hilo, HI

George Na'ope was born February 25, 1928, in Hawaii and was known there as "Uncle George." He devoted his life to preserving the ancient traditions of his people. "In the ancient hula and in all of our chants are the history of Hawaii." Na'ope saw progress from his days in school, when teaching the Hawaiian language and traditions was forbidden. "All of the schools are teaching hula now. I'm glad they're emphasizing the ancient dances in the schools and the youngsters are beginning to learn to chant in the Hawaiian language. They are learning the language in the schools, which is very, very good. "The hula is the ability to create one's most inner feelings with the love and respect for our culture."

As a deeply beloved Hawaiian musician and hula master, George Na'ope pushed the boundaries of traditional Hawaiian dress and wore individualistic, often flamboyant clothing, hats, jewelry, and leis. In this portrait, his long white lei, Polynesian print shirt, and ukulele are an expression of his distinctiveness, self-confidence, and stature in his community. Known on the mainland as the Hawaiian shirt and printed with flowers or Polynesian motifs, the Aloha shirt was first made and marketed by a Japanese immigrant to Hawaii in the 1930s. This loose-fitting shirt is worn untucked and usually has short sleeves and a left breast pocket. (See the story of another iconic shirt, the *guayabera*, in this issue.) The ukulele was adapted from instruments brought by Portuguese immigrants to Hawaii in the 1880s. The lei is an important symbol of love and friendship. The flowers and leaves and type of braiding are symbolic of different places and occasions.

Sue Yeon Park
Korean dancer and musician
2008 NEA National Heritage Fellow
New York, NY

Sue Yeon Park was born August 22, 1958, on Kanghwa, an island near the mouth of the Han River in South Korea. Her family was deeply involved with shamanic Buddhism, and Park became obsessed with the shaman's dance when she was very young. She once skipped school to attend a *gut*, a two- or three-day ritual performed by a *mudang*, or shaman. The shaman sings and dances during the gut, usually accompanied by three or four musicians who are typically family members. In the Seoul area, the gut includes a banquet followed by music and dancing. When Park was eleven, she became so carried away by post-banquet dancing that she grabbed the shaman's *janggo*, an hourglass shaped drum, and danced with it. The shaman told Park's mother that the child would become either a professional dancer or a *kangshin mudang*, a shaman who has no hereditary ties to the profession but receives the spirits.

In her portrait, Sue Yeon Park wears her costume for the *Salpur*i form of Korean dance, which is rooted in ancient shamanism. The solo dancer expresses both beauty and sadness to bring peace after a loss. The long, billowy white dress, called a *hanbok*, covers the feet, on which are worn *beo-seon* socks. The hanbok has a blouse, skirt, and belt. Controlled movements with a large white silk handkerchief are an important part of the dance and symbolize the dancer's state of mind and emphasize her subtle movements. Sue Yeon Park chose not to wear the elaborate face makeup that practitioners of this dance usually wear, showing more deeply how the costume is a medium of expression.

The Little Things: Uncovering Identity on Campus through Dress and Adornment *(Case Study of a Class Exhibition Project)*

by Carrie Hertz

As the Curator of Folk Arts at the Castellani Art Museum (CAM) of Niagara University, I developed and taught undergraduate classes as part of the new Art History with Museum Studies Program. The 2013-2014 period marked the program's inaugural school year. For Spring 2014, I introduced "Exhibiting Cultures," a course exploring the methodological, ethical, and theoretical implications of representing people, their lives and creations, in museum contexts with a special emphasis on anthropological and folkloristic approaches. During the first half of the semester, students learned about the history of representation in museums and how it has changed in relationship to broader shifts in social and cultural understandings about such factors as gender, race, ethnicity, and class differences. Much of the seminar-style discussions focused on issues of objectivity and subjectivity, the classification of material culture, curatorial authority, and the increasing emphasis on collaboration with source communities. During this time, students chose three exhibitions from local museums to visit and review. The second half of the semester was dedicated to working as a group (in this instance, six students) to design and implement an exhibition project from conception to installation in CAM's Education Gallery.

By the fifth week, the class determined a topic and research plan for their exhibition. To serve the educational goals of "Exhibiting Cultures," they were required to develop a project working directly with people from the community—a hallmark of the Folk Arts Program that I directed at CAM. In addition to practical concerns (like bearing in mind the limitations of their timeline, budget, and square footage), I encouraged students to consider the museum's mission: "Art is for everyone." I could not imagine a more fitting topic than the one they settled on: dress and adornment. How people choose to decorate their bodies is the most universal of arts. Every day we creatively communicate both our individual tastes and our social affiliations through the way we style ourselves.

The class chose to tackle this topic by focusing on NU's student body, a constituency that the museum has struggled to engage over the years. Inspired by readings that explore the complex relationships that people form with objects, they wanted to ask their fellow students about what items of dress and adornment best encapsulate their identity. After a crash course in interview techniques and fieldwork ethics, each student set out to record conversations on this issue with at least five students by the next class. Each week they returned to the group with reports of their progress in recording new interviews and to ask for help in perfecting the process. We wanted to ensure that our sample was representative of the diversity on campus, a reasonable task with an enrollment of around 3,000.

An early concern was the reluctance of men to participate. Did men really care less about their appearance, we asked, or did gender expectations discourage them from speaking openly about their relationship to dress? Students experienced greater success when they revealed that other men had already identified important items of adornment like sneakers, necklaces, and tattoos. Students couldn't help but ask themselves how they would answer the questions they put forth to others, and sharing their own examples also deepened their conversations with interviewees. By the end of the research phase, the class had collectively spoken with dozens of fellow students, all of whom gave permission for their recorded conversations to be archived in the museum.

For the next phase, I guided students in collaboratively developing an interpretative plan using the data they had collected. In early discussions, students had an impulse to claim everything that people did as "unique." Was this really true, I asked, pointing to parallels that appeared throughout the collected narratives. Does our data actually support this interpretation? It was pivotal to help them see how idiosyncratic details did not negate the importance of recognizing cultural patterns, balancing empirical specificity with useful generalizations.

I wrote each interviewee's name and one word identifying his or her item of adornment on individual Post-it notes and stuck them on a wall. I invited students to take turns suggesting different ways of organizing the notes into groups. We discussed the impact of form. How do various forms serve as cultural markers of identity associated with particular groups of people, lifestyles, or interests? How does the permanence of tattoos or the temporary application of lipstick affect the way we think about these types of adornment? We discussed the way that

Exhibition Timeline

Weeks 1-4 Introduce students to the exhibition project and ask them to consider possible (and practical) topics. Each student brings three topic suggestions for Week 5 discussion.

Week 5 Share student suggestions, asking the class to consider each in relationship to the following rubric: 1) What is a research question that we could answer by exploring this topic in an exhibition format? 2) Could we answer this question satisfactorily using the time, budget, and space we have available? 3) Does this topic/question serve the museum's mission? 4) Who will care? Once the research question is determined, outline a basic research plan with weekly goals. Establish what research materials (fieldnotes, recordings, signed release forms, etc.) will be due for discussion in Week 11 and turned in by Week 13.

Weeks 6-10 Share weekly progress reports in class and discuss the implications, refining the research process. Stay mindful of the ways that research findings could be translated into an exhibition.

Week 11 Share all research materials and determine a plan for interpretation, including what will be displayed and how will it be presented, both materially and intellectually. Establish exhibition themes and basic layout, division of labor, and installation timeline. Choose a working title.

Week 12 Write first drafts of exhibition text for in-class workshop. Prepare and finalize all research and additional exhibition materials to turn in by Week 13. Finalize title.

Weeks 13-14 Workshop exhibition labels, both as a class and in breakout groups. Finalize all decisions concerning exhibition design.

Week 15 Final drafts of all exhibition text are due.

Week 16 Opening Reception. Personal Reflection assignment is due.

accessories as objects could be gifted and re-circulated, becoming powerful links between people by giving physical substance to emotional connections. We asked what interviewees were communicating through their choices and whether those communications were intended to persuade others or to confirm a personal sense of self. In many cases, the examples pointed to seemingly ubiquitous and mundane items that had been transmuted by wearers into personal symbols of important relationships, transformative events, or future goals—qualities that could not be visually detected. In this manner, we outlined the communicative potential of dress and adornment as seen through our collected examples.

I asked students to think about what our exhibition could contribute to visitors' understanding (see *Exhibition Timeline*). What were we uniquely positioned to illustrate through our fieldwork? Quickly, the class realized that their conclusions were limited by the uniformity of their research sample. They could not present the phenomenon of dress and adornment comprehensively, but they had much to say about how it revealed shared experiences of being a college student. As we turned our attention to student life, the large thematic categories for the exhibition began to take shape.

Several class members expressed dissatisfaction with how college students are depicted in mass media as destructive, irresponsible, and over-privileged. Some of their collected examples uncovered deeply moving stories. One man highlighted a necklace he always wore, a final gift from a terminally ill woman he had cared for through a church program. Another young man talked about his favorite pair of sneakers, the first expensive possession he had ever purchased with money he had earned. For him, they represented his potential for self-determination and independence. One Muslim woman described her approach to wearing *hijab* both as a visual commitment to her faith and as an artistic pursuit, daily matching scarves to her outfit and mood. The class wanted the exhibition to articulate these examples of dedication to others and struggles for adulthood. College is a time of transition and change when students often negotiate conflicting feelings of nostalgia for their childhoods and longing for future self-reliance.

Following this line of thinking, the class determined three sections for the exhibition based on recurring themes they discovered in the narratives: Origins, Transformations, and Constants. For some interviewees, the stories they told were about where they came from, while for others they were about what they hope to become—a transformation into independent adults. Some stories, however, revealed the ways that items of adornment could serve as constant guides over a lifetime, if not across generations, passed between family members.

Once these themes were established, students had to consider how they would actually convey this information in a compelling museum display. When they considered the examples of dress and adornment first as objects, they saw drawbacks for exhibition. Many items were not visually interesting. Tattoos or things worn on a daily basis could not be borrowed. I asked, is this show really about necklaces, sneakers, and hijabs? Or is it about the way individuals instill these objects with meaning? In response, they deemed the personal stories to be the real source of interest, easily presented as label text. (The exhibit title emerged from this conversation about the power of ordinary "little things" to uncover important truths and experiences.) The stories, however, needed a visual representation to appeal to visitors and to invite them to connect with the narrators. We devised a schedule to photograph interviewees, visually and dynamically evoking their relationship with the key item of dress. At this point, we had to determine how many photographs could fit in the gallery space, as well as how much space would be devoted to each section or any other exhibit components. As a group, the class selected the best examples for each section, with some impassioned advocacy for their own interviews. The final choices were resolved by majority vote.

Sample Labels that Accompany Portraits

Example 1: Written by Jonah Pope
Nato Makier
Sophomore
tattoo

The individual students represented in the exhibit collaborated directly with their original interviewers throughout the whole process. Over the next week, they were escorted to the museum to have their portraits taken. To ensure some stylistic and quality consistency, I took the photographs with creative input from both the interviewer and the interviewee. Later, class members wrote labels for the students they worked with, taking drafts to them for further discussion. Those who had fewer individual labels to write were tasked with creating drafts of the section labels. Everyone wrote a version of a main label. The section labels and main label were workshopped in class, the final drafts representing a sort of composite.

Because they knew the featured students would visit the resulting exhibit, see their portraits, and read the labels, class members expressed both anxiety and exhilaration as planning progressed. They felt great responsibility to capture each student's voice and perspective. One young woman confessed that on a similar project in another class, when she was asked to write label copy for an exhibition of landscape paintings, she had not spent much time or effort on it. She had trouble connecting to the subject matter and wondered whether anyone would actually read it (and if they did, would they even realize whether the details were accurate?). This time, the project felt "more personal and real" and she agonized over making her contributions "fair" and "really, really good." Her ultimate goal, she said, was to move readers to tears.

Nato is from Lake Worth, Florida. He chose to talk about the tattoo on his left shoulder. The tattoo consists of a wolf's face surrounded by a paw print. When asked why he chose this placement, he said that it was easy to show to others when he wanted, but it was also very easy to hide. The tattoo represents courage and never backing down from any challenge. Wolves are known for always staying with their pack. During the interview Nato said, "Wolves will do anything to protect their family, which is kind of like me. I would do anything and be anything for my family: being a leader, or someone who helps out on the side whenever needed."

Nato drew the design last year during his freshman year. He wanted a visual and permanent representation of his connection to his family. He said, "This is what I was thinking about when I was deciding what to draw for my tattoo; I think it best represents me, being a family-oriented person." When asked what he wanted the viewers to know, he said that he wants to make his family proud and be the best person he can be.

Once all the portraits were taken, I put together a slideshow with multiple versions of each subject to choose from. Students were very sensitive to how they imagined their classmates would want to be seen. One student had posed throughout the portrait session with a pronounced model-pout. I was pleased when I finally caught her in a more natural smile. The class, however, unanimously rejected the image in favor of one that looked magazine-cover ready, arguing that the posture better illustrated the student's story of confidence through fashionable dress and better reflected the intentional, performative nature of self-presentation. Who were we, they asked, to decide what is more "true" to her personality? Molly Harrison echoed this sentiment in a self-reflection assignment at the end of the semester, "I think what makes a good exhibition is if the museum captured the view of the people they are representing or trying to show."

At the end of the semester, the majority of students described collaborating with others—both classmates and exhibition subjects—to be the most stressful, yet also the most rewarding part of the project. Tensions occasionally arose when people felt their ideas were too quickly rejected by the group and my role often revolved around encouraging everyone both to listen with grace and take the time to articulate clearly the logic underpinning opinions. Every decision—from which stories to include, to what color to paint the walls—had to be judged against the "thesis" of the show, the mission of the museum, and the principles of respectful representation that we discussed all semester.

Students struggled to find the best way to represent individual stories concisely, incorporating the subject's words, while also making the text comprehensible and relatable to a general audience. Nick Berdzik identified "getting the label right"

Example 2: Written by Elizabeth Gatto
Liz Raby
Freshman
clothing

Liz Raby is from Lewiston, New York. She is an accounting major with a minor in Spanish. Liz felt that her camouflage best portrays who she is to the world. She said, "It's a personal reflection on my hobbies, my interests, what I believe in, and the country aspect of society." Liz takes great pride in being a country girl and in her love for the outdoors. Much of this pride is a result of where she comes from, having grown up on a farm surrounded by nature. Her clothes help her portray this pride. She wants to show through her dress that she has a very down-to-earth personality.

Whenever she wears camouflage, Liz feels connected to her brother who is in the army. For this reason, her clothes have a special significance that people wouldn't know when just glancing at her. The durability of her clothes is also very important to her. The camouflage allows her to hunt and enjoy the outdoor activities she loves without the restrictions that some clothing has.

Example 3: Written by Brianna Buczek
Shannon Cooper
Junior
tattoo

Shannon's tattoo, located on her left shoulder, holds incredible meaning for her. A testament to her journey so far, the tattoo is a quote by William Shakespeare: "And though she be but little, she is fierce." The tattoo was inked on her body in January of 2013, right before she enlisted in ROTC. It is a constant reminder to her that even though she is a small woman, she has the same abilities as men. Shannon had the quote placed on her left shoulder as an addition to the tattoo of roses already trailing down her ribcage. The roses represent the women in her family. While the tattoo is not always visible, she believes it is something that defines her struggles and helps her to continue to face adversity in the world.

as the most challenging aspect. "Trying to get their voice to come out in the label," he admitted, "is hard to do. You need to have a good interview in order for this to be completed." Like Nick, many students in retrospect wished they had conducted more interviews and asked more questions during the interviews they recorded. Elizabeth Gatto concluded, "The more questions you ask the better understanding you gain of the person you're interviewing."

To encourage visitors to draw personal parallels with the students' narratives, the class designed an interactive component for the exhibit. One wall included a bulletin board with a nearby table and chairs holding colored pencils and sheets of paper. The sheets had a plain outline drawing of a humanoid figure that Elizabeth Gatto created. A prompt on the wall read: "How do YOU express yourself through dress and adornment? Draw a picture to share!"

On the last day of class, we held an opening reception to honor the participants. Nearly 60 students attended, more than I had seen in my three years as curator gather in the museum without a class requirement. Many participants (both the student-curators and the 15 featured students) brought their parents. During the reception, one professor commented to me that she was surprised at how "typical" the examples in the show were—no purple hair, no outrageous body art. I asked her how many students on campus she knew who actually fit that description. Campus style at the small, private Catholic university is conservative. By cleaving to common experience rather than looking for outliers in the community, the exhibit captured the diversity of expression and demographics on campus without exaggerating it. Too often, both popular and scholarly treatments of dress and adornment neglect the average for the extreme, lessening our ability to

contemplate the meaningful in the everyday. Projects like this one are important for revealing the pivotal roles that dress and adornment play as forms of creativity and nonverbal communication in our daily lives. In her self-assessment, Elizabeth Gatto summarized what the class had taught her: "This project changed how I view dress and adornment because I found even though most people are not obvious about it there is an underlying story to be told and reasoning behind the way they choose to present themselves. I now see that dress and adornment is not an unconscious decision. It is a complex method of self expression that people put a lot of thought into."

Seena Salleh, a student featured in the exhibition, poses with her mother.

Another student, responding more personally to the same sentiment, apologized for her appearance in class throughout the semester and declared, "I will no longer be dressing in sweats anymore :)." As I smiled and appreciated the shared joke in this assessment, a compelling story about student learning emerges. This student not only recognized the communicative potential of her clothes, she also realized that her choices may be interpreted in ways that she had not intended based on viewers' perspectives and expectations. Her conclusion satisfied one of the project's primary pedagogical goals: to demonstrate that effective communication, in a museum exhibition and in social life, requires seeing the potential for dialogue.

Carrie Hertz *is the Curator of Textiles and Costume at the Museum of International Folk Art. From 2011 to 2014, she served as Curator of Folk Arts at the Castellani Art Museum of Niagara University. She earned her PhD in Folklore from Indiana University. Hertz has published on topics of dress and adornment in* Museum Anthropology Review, Midwestern Folklore*, and* Voices: The Journal of the New York Folklore Society.

Clothes Encounters: Ten Days in Our Perpetual Study of Everyday Life

by Mark Wagler

Clothing Fieldwork and Discussions

The day before we started studying clothes, our class was talking about the steps of using a pencil sharpener. While I'm thinking in the back of my mind, "cultural process," I ask, "What do we do first?"

"Put the pencil in the sharpener!" a student answers confidently. I dutifully record, near the center of the blackboard:

Put pencil in sharpener.

"What comes before that? What happened before that prompts us to use the pencil sharpener?" I push them toward more penetrative seeing and detailed recording. I know this is the only way I can get away with spending so much time on studying local culture—by constantly deepening the experience, with new vocabulary and new awareness of cultural dynamics. Hands are flying in the air, students eager to show they're getting it—a common school game. For every suggestion they make, I respond with a question, until a suggestion makes its way to the top of our list on the blackboard:

Notice pencil is dull.

We have a brief, lively conversation about different ways kids notice that a pencil needs sharpening: the lead no longer has a point / is broken, the words / the handwriting / the script is fuzzy / not sharp / too wide, until a student cracks us up by saying, "My pencil needs sharpening because I need a break from writing." By now we're riffing like players in a jazz combo, improvising with old knowledge used in new ways—we're having fun examining everyday life.

As our discussion crescendos, I am determined to end it while students are still eager. I want them to be excited about this idea while they do homework about the same topic. "How do you know when you're finished?" "I look at the pencil." "What just happened to make you look at the pencil?" When no answers satisfy me, I ask the class to listen quietly while a volunteer sharpens a pencil. "What do we hear?" I ask them. We are unable to describe a change in sound satisfactorily. "What did you feel?" I ask the volunteer. "It got much easier turning the crank." At that moment I announce their homework assignment for that evening. Over lunch I write it out for them:

1. Write for 30 minutes in your Kid-to-Kid notebook [a notebook used only for writing about culture].
2. Describe the steps of doing various things around the house. For example:
- *all the steps in doing dishes*
- *the exact sequence of brushing teeth*
- *the order of events for taking care of a pet*
- *the succession of actions in mowing the lawn*

3. For each procedure, number the steps in doing the activity.
4. Describe as many procedures as you can in 30 minutes.

The next morning kids are eager to read some procedures they recorded. "How many of you set the table with pretty much the same steps she listed?" They look around while I count. "OK, I see nine hands. How many of you do it very differently? Four of you. What are some very different steps in your home?"

When a volunteer reads the steps of putting dirty clothes in the laundry, the discussion begins to bloom. Some kids leave their dirty clothes on the floor, some in a pile in the middle of the room, some in a family clothes hamper, and a few put them down a clothes chute or take them to the basement. "How many of you do the laundry at your place?" A few girls raise their hands. "How many of you help with laundry?" More hands. "How many of you have helped or watched enough so that you know the steps of doing laundry in your family?" Most of the hands. "Let's put all the steps on the board. Don't worry if you don't all do the same steps."

Some families have regular laundry days; others do laundry whenever there are enough clothes to wash. Those of us who sort the laundry describe why we put whites in one load, with denims waiting in another pile. I briefly describe the wringer washing machine my family used when I was a boy, with wash water in one tub, rinse water in the second, and using the same water through whites and delicate clothes and solid colors until the water is so dirty it's only good for a final load of rugs and rags before it's changed and a second cycle of wash loads begins.

There is so much enthusiasm in this discussion that I ask students, "Should we do a homework assignment about clothes?" "Yes!" most of them shout. "What assignment will help us learn about clothes we have at home?" "Let's make a list" is suggested. "Takes too long," several moan. We finally agree that students will list the categories of clothing they and others in their families have. To make sure my less verbal students understand categories, we brainstorm a few—and I'm careful to call on students who could be challenged with this assignment. Once they're successful with "school clothes" and "work clothes," we move on to another project.

The next day, after a few students read from their lists, we begin to construct a master list for our classroom. We discuss the kind of list we want and decide that it needs to be short yet include almost all the clothes we have at home. I suggest, and they agree, that as much as possible our categories should fit the ways many of us think about, use, store, and take care of our clothes. The unified list we construct on the blackboard is the beginning of the structure of the "Clothes Encounter" video we will soon make. At the end of our work that day a student asks, "Can we use this list for homework tonight?" Shouts of agreement erupt. "We have a great list," I concur, "But what will we write?" We don't come up with anything very profound, so I type up this homework assignment:

1. Make lists of special clothing you have available:

- *clothes of parents, ancestors*
- *traditional, ethnic, religious clothing*
- *clothes from other countries*
- *dressing up: suits, ties, dresses, jewelry*
- *uniforms: teams, scouts, dance, etc.*
- *special activities: working, sleeping, etc.*

2. Describe how, when, why some of these clothes are used.

Video still image from "Clothes Encounters".

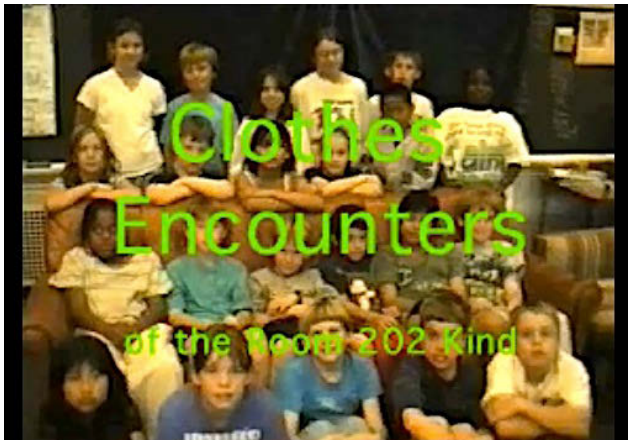
Day after day they ask for more homework assignments to study family clothing. I stretch myself,

looking for new ways of documenting and new concepts that will deepen our understanding of clothes. Fortunately, my wife teaches folklore courses (what I think of as the study of everyday life) at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, so she and I brainstorm ideas and assignments. Because of her input, the assignment and discussion on uniforms are excellent, especially our inquiry into the functions of uniforms in a number of occupations.

I introduce our conversation about ethnic clothing by changing a few items of clothing in front of them: 1) I begin by wearing a sport coat and tie; 2) I remove the sport coat, revealing the suspenders students always see me wear; 3) I remove the tie; and finally 4) I put on the Amish black hat I always wear outside in the winter. Our conversation goes back to uniforms (mainstream sport coat and tie; cultural uniformity of suspenders and hat) and continues into exploring tradition, change, and living bi-culturally. Whenever I want students from outside the white middle-class mainstream to take a risk in describing some aspect of their culture, I model what I hope for by describing that same aspect in my Amish-Mennonite background. Later, in our video, a Mexican American student will wear the white dress she wore for First Communion, a Jewish student will wear the yarmulke he wears to synagogue, a Hmong student will wear the clothes she wears at Hmong New Year—followed by, at student insistence, my clothing makeover sequence.

The eighth and final fieldwork assignment is to interview a parent about shopping for kids' clothes. The next day students report a lot of variation among our families. Some parents do the shopping by themselves. Some kids shop with their parents. A few kids have an allowance for clothes. I am amazed to hear that a few shop for clothes on their own. There is even more variety in the stores they go to—given our community culture, for every kid mentioning an upscale store, another goes to Shopko or other big box store, and a third brags about getting clothes at garage sales and Goodwill. Most students report passing on clothes from older to younger children and among families.

Making a Video



"Do you want to make a video about the culture of our clothes?" I ask. "Can we wear our clothes in the video?" Students call out elaborate ideas, inspired by their experiences of movie watching, so I let them interrupt each other for a moment. When they've slowed down, I explain that a parent has volunteered to help us shoot a video and that a professor at the university could help me edit it, "But I don't think they have time to make a big video." Some students are disappointed but gradually accept this as a real-world constraint. Energy builds again when I suggest, "Let's send our video to the other classrooms in our video exchange project." Designing the video for a real audience heightens and tightens our discussion about clothes. Especially challenging is our effort to represent ourselves to others. A few boys still want to think big, and the detailed scenarios they spin out help us to consider how clothing connects to many often-complex aspects of our everyday lives.

Eventually bold script ideas yield to practical design decisions. Everybody will be in the video. Each student may wear many different kinds of clothes, adapting the same categories we used for homework. Each student will be videotaped (lower body only) wearing tennis shoes and either

shorts or pants, and then videotaped again (headshot) wearing a T-shirt. This feature emerged from an earlier discussion of uniforms and uniformity, and our ongoing inquiry as to whether the clothes we wear make us look more different from or more similar to each other; I'm happy for this decision, because everybody will be seen at least two times besides shots of the whole class. These design ideas simplify the way we can verbalize but maximize the amount of clothing we can show in a short video.

Any project, like making a video, is an opportunity for community building—among students and with parents and other partners. I send a memo home to parents asking for their help with our next homework assignment:

We're in the middle of creating a short exciting video about our clothing cultures. I would like to have at least 2 parents to help with changing clothes. Also, please brainstorm with your child ideas of what clothing they might bring, make sure you know which items they are bringing, and help them pack their clothes in an appropriate bag, suitcase, backpack, whatever. Sign on the reverse side that you have reviewed their list. I hope children will be bold in bringing in clothing that is culturally distinctive.

Students come in Thursday morning, long before the first bell rings, with bags and suitcases full of clothes. There's a festive feeling in Room 202. Throughout the morning, parent volunteers call for students to bring clothes for the next category being shot. As soon as that cluster of students has changed clothes in the bathrooms, they get in line in the hallway where our parent videographer shoots individuals and small groups for about one second each. Kids in sport uniforms are shot out on the playground. Finally, she films the whole class in a few longer sequences in the classroom. During the course of the day, students see each other in many kinds of clothing, and thus our lists, stories, and ideas become embodied.

When we watch the footage a few days later, the kids look to see themselves, and fortunately, because of three whole class shots, everybody is in the video at least six times. While one girl brought

Video Transcript: Clothes Encounters of the Room 202 Kind

Everybody but me in Room 202 has the same culture, at least I thought so, because everybody dresses the same way at school. Our T-shirts, shorts, pants, and tennis shoes look like they could come from the same closet. I thought I was the only kid who wore different clothes at home.

One day Mr. Wagler said, "Tomorrow bring to school some of the special clothes you have in your house. Let's see what we really look like."

We brought our best clothes including party dresses, coats & ties. Mary showed the dress she wore for first communion, Jeremy the yarmulke he wears to synagogue and Kaonu the clothes she wears at Hmong New Year. Our teacher, like usual, wore his Amish hat and suspenders.

We brought clothes our parents, grandparents, and even great-grandparents wore, examples of our old traditions.

Then we had a lot of fun showing our baby clothes.

We also displayed clothes we have from other countries.

I found out we all have special clothes, sometimes uniforms, for special things we do—like Scouts, soccer, biking, hunting, gymnastics, hockey, baseball, choir—and even old clothes for work.

I never knew clothes, family traditions, and dressing up, could be so much fun. Even when we look the same, now I know we come from different cultures.

I'm hoping we study food next time--I want to discover how culture tastes in Room 202.

six extra items, a few students brought only one extra item of clothing. I wonder if some are uncomfortable with the identity they present with distinctive clothing. To make this "fieldwork + discussion + media" model work, I need students to develop trust that other students will respect the ways they represent themselves and their families. I am not ready so early in the school year to discuss my observation that a higher percentage of students of color bring in dress/ethnic clothes, while a higher percentage of white students bring in uniforms they wear to play sports or participate in special youth groups.

Our last task, after viewing the raw footage a few times, is to write a voiceover. It is a single narrative telling the story of our experience, and we brainstorm what to include. That evening they each write a draft for homework and share excerpts the next day:

- *The teacher asked, "What's clothing culture?"*
- *First day of school, not much culture.*
- *It all started on a Thursday morning.*
- *Everybody thought everyone wore the same clothes, until they did a project videotaping clothes.*
- *One day a group of girls and boys started to wear the clothes of their own culture. Now they are a lot happier & learn faster.*

A handful of students create a group draft, which I polish for final revisions by the whole class. Ten students volunteer to read segments. The whole class watches them rehearse and record. After a colleague and I edit the final video, "Clothes Encounters of the Room 202 Kind[1]" is included in a tape with short videos from all the classrooms in the Kid-to-Kid Video Exchange Project. Hundreds of students in this exchange will watch our video, and later it will be shown at the meeting of the Education Section at the American Folklore Society annual conference and included in a museum exhibit on clothing.

Our fieldwork assignments now move to related topics, a continuous homework thread, always looking for connections as we move from cultural element to element. Following the assignment about shopping for clothes, we begin a series of assignments on family shopping for food and other items. We could just as easily transition at this point to food, but that comes a year later, when half these students will still be in this classroom, doing 18 homework assignments on foodways resulting in a much longer video, "What's Cooking in Room 202?"

What's Happening in Room 202?

Why are kids so capable and engaged in the first month of school? How can an investigation of clothing in everyday life be sustained and continue into many other aspects of local culture? How can such ordinary experiences accumulate into significant learning?

Half the students in this *multi-age classroom* are 5th graders who spent last year in this same classroom as 4th graders, and return with healthy inertia and continuity, their energy, skills, expectations, and attitudes shaped by doing similar projects last year. These veterans expect a voice in what we do, hands-on learning, new experiences and ideas, and projects requiring hard work followed by feelings of accomplishment. They are also fluent writers who readily record what they observe.

The other half are new 4th graders who anticipate spending two years in this environment and are rapidly learning classroom culture from the older students, knowing that next year they will be older mentors for a new group of younger students. They are more willing to write at length, speak

expressively, explore topics in in-depth discussions, engage in open-ended projects, and take risks to do school differently because of behaviors they observe and admire in the returning students.

Our class has *many parent and community partners*. Half the parents have also returned from last year and are at home in the culture of the classroom. They understand our focus on inquiry, place, equity, and real-world work and networks; our homework procedures, at times requiring extended parent participation; our ongoing need for volunteers to assist with projects; and our eagerness for parent-led projects. At our 90-minute Parent Night during the second week of school, the new parents were introduced to the language, routines, projects, and values of our class by both returning parents and me. I made a pitch, as always, for parent participation. Almost immediately a parent, Medora Ebersole, offered to help us with video projects, starting with "Clothes Encounters."

I actively search for community partners for classroom projects. For example, Michael Streibel, Professor of Educational Technology at the University of Wisconsin, and I have just successfully written a grant that funds video cameras and extended release time for teachers who participate with us in the Kid-to-Kid Video Exchange Project. Prof. Streibel will sit beside me through every step of learning how to using digital editing equipment to complete "Clothes Encounters."

Whenever possible, our extended projects reach fruition as we present our work to *real-world audiences* that extend beyond our classroom. For example, every year each student in my class does a two-month independent inquiry project, based on original research, resulting in articles they publish in *Great Blue: A Journal of Student Inquiry*, an annual publication from the Heron Network. Already in September, our class is reading articles from the current issue, beginning with articles written by students in our class. Our new 4th graders will find articles by Room 202 students in the "Kid-to-Kid" section of the journal about how people use Wingra Creek, kids' after-school activities, and family rules, responsibilities, and discipline. With about 15 other Heron Network classrooms, we also create conferences, exhibits, web pages, videos, and variety shows.

These extended audiences raise the quality of student work. Knowing that hundreds, at times thousands, of kids and adults will view their work helps kids "shape up" to higher expectations. There's a new boost of energy, an emerging pride among students, when they realize their research on clothing will result in a video.

Cultural dialogue is a key focus in our study of culture and language arts. The following year, as part of a district Action Research project, I write a lengthy article, "Kid-to-Kid: Cultural Dialogue in the Center of the Social Studies": *All dialogue is cultural, since it depicts interactions among people. Traditions, arts, laws, economies, indeed most cultural forms emerge in dialogical contexts. . . . . People not only use dialogue to communicate culture, it is also a big part of the content of culture. . . . As one student wrote, "If there are all different kinds of cultures, I think you'd learn a lot from each other. But only if you talk about culture. If no one talks about culture, then no one will learn about culture."*

Hence our daily listening to students as they describe their clothing culture, our repeated use of the phrase "kid-to-kid," and the students' choice for the name of our video, "Clothes Encounters." Students think differently as they write about their use of clothes because they know that the next day they will tell 22 other people about it. We try to represent these encounters in our video by showing students mingling closely with each other. We observe that we choose clothes not only because of warmth or cost or aesthetics, but also as a way to present ourselves to and connect with each other.

Two weeks of dialogue about clothes is not enough to meet the many social studies standards for 4th and 5th graders. But our year-long study of *complex systems* will. Extended over a year, or two years in this class, our inquiries and fieldwork help us accumulate an enormous amount of cultural content and dynamics, as students begin to form mental models of their family culture and neighborhood culture, and later in the year use additional media to build models of selected elements of the cultures of Wisconsin, the United States, and elsewhere in the world. At the same time, students get extensive practice in listening, speaking, reading, and writing, often in "authentic contexts" where language awareness is heightened and where rehearsal and editing make sense for students. We use a similar approach to studying nature, using place-based inquiries and observations to build mental models of complex ecological systems in our backyards ("Places-in-Nature"), Lake Wingra wetlands (field explorations led by a parent naturalist), and a "Living Machine" model of these wetlands (interconnected classroom containers with multiple habitats, built by a parent and me in consultation with an Edgewood College biology professor).

Student buy-in for studying clothing, indeed for all our classroom projects, is built on *student voice*. Students not only speak, but they know they are being heard. They know we listen attentively to their fieldwork reports. And they know their opinions help shape what we do in the classroom. Every step of the way—from the first assignment on categories of clothes to the final drafting of the video narrative—I ask students for input on what we will do. Student voice nudges the classroom climate from top-down requirements to democratic participation. Voice becomes choice. Throughout the project, students not only influence what the whole class will do, they also have many individual choices. Within the constraints of the assignments, they choose the examples they will write about and later report on, the clothes they will bring to class, whether to read the video narrative, and the quality of work they perform. As the year continues, they will have progressively more choices, culminating in their two-month, independent "Great Blue" projects.

Equally important for me, I have great support for my *teacher voice*. I am not obliged to teach like everyone else, because in this context we still believe that all of us teach better when we respond not only to the constraints of district-wide standards and "best practices" but also use the best of our personal skills, experience, and interests. For example, I am able to apply my prior professional storytelling experience to teach oral language and leverage the connections between oral and written language. This yields additional time for big classroom projects that I otherwise would need to use for more work on reading and writing. Also, all teachers have distinctive cultural backgrounds. I am fortunate to be supported by my principal in constructing a curriculum that prompts me to make good use of my background.

There would have been a much quicker way to study clothing in our classroom: simply get or make a short lesson plan and follow it. Creating a more complex, sustainable teaching and learning environment has allowed my students and me to study not just clothing but a myriad of family and community expressions and interactions, creating a perpetual and close cultural encounter.

Footnotes:

1. Watch "Clothes Encounters" at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sSZ4aZUDkkg

***Mark Wagler**, a situated learning consultant, was raised in an Amish-Mennonite farm family. He has told stories, directed projects, done ethnographic fieldwork, and researched student learning in more than 1,000 schools and other community settings. He has taught at all levels, including in a 4/5 classroom in Madison, Wisconsin, where his students regularly investigated local cultural and natural communities. Among other academic and teaching awards, he has received a Woodrow Wilson Fellowship and a Presidential Award for Excellence in Teaching Mathematics and Science.*

Classroom Application: Clothes at Home

Clothes are at once practical and symbolic. This lesson, written for grades 3-5 but easily adapted for other grades, introduces the variety of clothing used by different groups and for different occasions. Students will
1) use class-generated categories to inventory the clothes they have at home;
2) explore how clothes are used to identify with groups; and
3) learn the variety of clothes worn by their classmates for different occasions.

Opening Discussion
Since the key to this lesson is the homework by students, make sure that this opening reflection on clothing is short enough that students are keen to inventory the clothes they have at home and eager to tell more the next day in class. Ask some but not all the questions suggested here.

Hold up a pair of tennis shoes and begin to "unpack" the cultural meanings associated with them:

- What are these? What are they used for?
- What do these shoes tell us about the person wearing them?
- Who might wear them? Who wouldn't wear them?
- When and where would these shoes be worn?
- Who made these shoes?
- How many of you sometimes wear tennis shoes?
- What other shoes do you currently have?
- What other shoes do other family members wear?
- What shoes did your ancestors wear?

Next create a list of the different kinds of clothing found in the homes of your students. Accept their categories, but also prompt them with questions to find categories they may not have thought of, especially any categories you have included in a printed homework assignment:

- Who sometimes changes clothes after school—or has work clothes for housework or yardwork?
- Do you have any fancy clothes? When and where do you wear them?
- What is something you wear that you think almost nobody else in our class wears?
- What groups—occupational, recreational, ethnic, religious—do you or other members of your family belong to that involve special clothes?

Now watch the two-minute video, "Clothes Encounters of the Room 202 Kind." (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sSZ4aZUDkkg) Ask questions such as:

- What clothes do students in this class wear that you also wear?
- What do you know about these students, just from looking at their clothes?
- If we made a video about our classroom, "Clothes Encounters of the Room ___ Kind," what would we include that they didn't include?

If time permits, watch the video again, asking your students to try to figure out what homework students in Room 202 must have done to prepare for making their video.

Homework Assignment
You may simply ask students to bring in objects of clothing from as many different categories as possible. Or, divide the assignment into two evenings of homework—the first to take an inventory of clothing at home, and the second to select items to bring in to the classroom.

Create your own homework worksheet, or use one on page 57 of the *Teachers' Guide to Local Culture* (link below) with prompts such as:

Describe different kinds of clothing you have at home: what the clothes look like; where you got them; and how, when, and why your family uses these clothes.

- Everyday clothes for school and home
- Dressing up for special events: suits, ties, dresses, jewelry
- Traditional, ethnic, or religious clothing
- Clothes of parents, ancestors
- Clothes from other countries
- Uniforms: teams, Scouts, choir
- Costumes: Halloween, drama, make-believe
- Clothes for special activities: work, sleeping

Homework Reports with Follow-up Discussion

Whether students return with worksheets or with objects of clothing, the key to this follow-up discussion is to help students see how items of clothing are used for diverse practical needs, and as symbols of cultural identity.

If students bring in objects of clothing, decide how you want to exhibit them: on tabletops with "museum cards" contextualizing each object, or with oral descriptions while students are wearing or holding clothing objects. If students report orally from their worksheets, it will be fruitful to have students tell what they found in several, but not all the categories. It would be best to explore several aspects in depth. You might guide their inquiry, for example, into the functions of uniforms—durability, low cost, ease of identification, team identity, etc. Ask questions such as:

- Why do traffic officers wear uniforms and police detectives don't?
- Are a suit and tie a uniform?
- Are tennis shoes, shorts, and T-shirt a uniform?

Even more powerful would be to examine ethnic, regional, and religious traditions:

- What clothes do you wear that are most similar to the clothes worn by your ancestors?
- What clothes do you wear that are unique—that people of other backgrounds probably don't wear?
- What clothes do you wear that make you feel very special?

You might extend the idea of special clothes by showing an item used at a ceremonial event, such as a veil worn at a wedding or a mortarboard worn at graduation. Because these items are worn only once or a few times in a lifetime, their use is very symbolic:

- When do people wear this?
- Why do they wear it?
- What other items of clothing are worn only very occasionally?

Adapted with permission by Madison Children's Museum from Mark Wagler's *Teachers' Guide to Local Culture*. Find ideas for teaching this lesson to primary grades and suggestions for extending the lesson into other cultural aspects on pp. 36-37 of the *Guide.* http://madisonchildrensmuseum.org/wp-content/uploads/LOCAL-TEACHERS-GUIDE-DOC-1.pdf

Performing the Personal in a State of Transition: Decorated Mortarboards

by Sheila Bock

In the 1960s, a new informal tradition of decorated mortarboards began to emerge at university commencement ceremonies, and it is still going strong today. My interest in this topic began in December 2011, when I attended my first commencement as a faculty member at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV). At this event, as I watched the procession of the graduates, I was struck not only by the large number who had decorated their caps, but also by the diverse range of creative expression presented through this form of adornment. Since then, I have attended four additional ceremonies at UNLV, and I have spent a good deal of time online seeking mortarboard photos and admiring the thoughtful and clever ways that graduates transform their ritual garb into material forms of self-expression. In this essay, I draw upon my observations to share some initial thoughts on the role these public performances of the personal play within the ritual space of the commencement ceremony.

When it comes time to graduate from a college or university in the United States, many students participate in the ritual ceremony known as commencement to mark their formal transition from the status of student to the status of graduate. This ceremony functions as a kind of rite of passage that, according to the anthropologist Arnold van Gennep, is characterized by three distinct stages – separation from a former status, a liminal state of transition, and reintegration into society with a new status. Graduates find themselves in a transitional stage, separated from their previous identities as students and looking ahead to their new status once they have diplomas in hand. Folklorists and anthropologists know that formalized rituals help mediate these liminal spaces of transition, and the highly performative nature of commencement offers a clear example. In fact, by ritually marking "the achievement of educational milestones," these ceremonies work both "to facilitate this transition and convey institutional values" (Magolda 2003:787).

Dress takes on special symbolic meaning within the ritual space of the commencement ceremony. With the exception of family and friends in the audience, participants are donned in academic dress that has its roots in medieval Europe. This dress marks the differences in status *within* the institutional setting, creating a "hierarchy of robe design" (Bronner 2012: 390). For example, graduates earning a PhD, the highest degree a university offers, wear a velvet tam and a robe with a velvet face running down the front and three velvet stripes on the bell-shaped sleeves. Undergraduates, on the other hand, wear unadorned robes with pointed sleeves and tasseled mortarboards. Dress, then, makes visible the distinctions between the educational accomplishments celebrated in the ceremony. The uniformity of dress also diminishes the differences between individuals within each category, such as socioeconomic status, reasons for pursuing a degree, family obligations, or the number of years it took to complete the degree. In other words, the ritual function of dress during commencement foregrounds what graduates have in common – their transitional status and their role within the university – over what makes them unique.

Dress is just one way that graduates' individuality is symbolically erased within the formalized ritual space of commencement. As the folklorist Simon Bronner explains, at many large institutions, graduates "are recognized simply by quickly standing together in the midst of a huge arena" (2012:393). Even when they get to walk across the stage, their moment in the spotlight is brief, and often their individual names might not even be called. Graduates who are highlighted as award recipients or student speakers are most often selected because of their academic success, and they are introduced as embodying the core university values being performed within the commencement ritual. Individual identities are invoked to affirm their membership in, and solidarity with, the university community more broadly.

The liminal state in which the graduates find themselves is a time of flux and ambiguity, and the anthropologist Victor Turner showed how the betwixt and between nature of this state opens up possibilities for participants to engage in both reflexivity and ludic, or playful, expression. Within the ritual space of commencement where public affirmations of shared identities and values are symbolically performed, then, we also find creative expression: the decorated mortarboard. These flat, four-sided caps function easily as blank canvases, and, if greeting cards and graduation-themed party decorations offer any indication, the mortarboard is a classic image of graduation in American culture today. Thus, mortarboards provide a practical and highly symbolic way for graduates to take some control and personally encode their ritual dress.

Emerging Themes

Many mortarboards that I have seen foreground important relationships and group affiliations. Often, graduates show pride in the school they attended by writing its name on their caps, including an image of the school mascot, using school colors, or expressing a school cheer, such as "Go Bears!" – in effect validating the ideal of the unified university community so central to the ceremony. At the same time, students reference alternate group affiliations, including majors or student organizations. For example, at the Spring 2014 commencement ceremony at UNLV, one graduate focused on her affiliation with Women's Studies, while another highlighted the completion of her nursing degree. Similarly, it is not at all uncommon to see members of a sorority decorate mortarboards using similar colors and designs featuring the letters of their social organization to make visible their connection to one another.

The relationships referenced on caps also extend beyond the university community. For example, I have seen numerous references to religious affiliations ("Proverbs 3:5-6," "Thank you Jesus."). In addition, a very common message expresses gratitude to family members who have offered emotional and financial support ("Thanks Mom and Dad!"), although references to family take other forms as well. In 2014, for example, one UNLV graduate donned a cap decorated in crayon by her young niece that read, "I'm a McCrea."

The diverse range of group affiliations and relationships referenced on caps should not be surprising, especially if we consider the cultural anthropologist Rebekah Nathan's assertion that "there is little that is automatically shared among people by virtue of attending the same university" (Nathan 2005:39). Thus, students' experiences of "community" while pursuing a degree form just as much (if not more) around personal networks and everyday experiences as institutional affiliations. Graduates, then, use their caps to articulate the importance of these communities and relationships not otherwise visible within the more formal structures of the commencement ritual.

Another common theme is the foregrounding of the individual. Of course, the very act of decorating the mortarboard is meant to make the individual stand out from the crowd. Often, though, the content itself further highlights individuality. In addition to writing their names on their caps, many graduates use mortarboards to highlight their personal interests, serving as a form of self-presentation. In the words of one blogger who decorated her cap, "I also wanted my cap to represent me…therefore I decided to incorporate my favorite things, Phi Mu, Lilly, and Pearls!" (SarahSmiles 365 2011). Decorated mortarboards commonly feature personal pronouns ("I Did It. Yay Me!," "3 Years…2 Majors…1 Graduate…Me!"), along with identifications of individual accomplishments such as getting into graduate school ("Next stop…USC!") or sources of personal pride ("First generation"). Consider one UNLV graduate who, after completing her Masters in Social Work, decorated her mortarboard with the Wonder Woman insignia. When I asked why, she explained that on the first day of graduate school her wife chose Wonder Woman as a symbol of the graduate's hard work and sacrifice. She thus wanted that symbol, and the personal meanings it carried for her and her family, to be represented on the day she walked across the stage and received her diploma.

People also use the tops of their mortarboards to showcase their personalities, most often in the form of humor. For example, one graduate thanked "Mom, Dad, and Coffee," while another noted, "99 Problems, But a Diploma Ain't One," in reference to an iconic hip-hop lyric. Many amusing messages that I have observed involve playful re-framings of popular culture references. For example, one mortarboard humorously referenced the ad campaign for Dos Equis beer. At the end of each commercial, a character deemed "The Most Interesting Man in the World" says, "I don't always drink beer, but when I do, I prefer Dos Equis." Pasting a large image of this character on her mortarboard, along with an image of a space shuttle, the graduate included the adaptation, "I don't always graduate from college, but when I do I go work for NASA."

The role of "student" is just one aspect of people's identities as they make their way through higher education, even for those who reach the institutionally recognized benchmarks of academic success, such as high GPAs. For the most part, other aspects of identity—such as family roles and sense of humor—are not inherently valued in the academic arena, and often are seen as standing in the way of student success. Furthermore, bigger universities have become notorious for frustrating bureaucracies that fail to take into account the needs and desires of individuals. As one professor at a large state school quipped, "At [name of university], some students think they are just a number, but that's not true. Here, you are not even a number. You are a bar code." As I described above, the formalized structure of the commencement ceremony diminishes individual differences, ritually dramatizing much of students' experiences within their institution. The blank canvas of the mortarboard provides students the opportunity to claim some of this ritual space and make visible those nonacademic aspects of themselves that they wish to be publicly represented.

One final recurring theme that I have encountered is reflection on the future. While the purported function of commencement is to mark graduates' shift in status ritually, students find themselves still in a liminal state, no longer a student but not quite sure what life as an alumnus will be. The reincorporation stage of the rite of passage has not yet been reached. Many decorated caps communicate a sense of optimism, marked by phrases such as "The Best Is Yet to Come" or "Time to Fly." Thoughts about the future can also stir up anxiety and inspire decorations that call attention to being unemployed ("Hire Me," "Dude, Where's My Job?"). One graduate wrote, "May the job offers be ever in your favor," drawing connections between the challenges of the current job market and the ruthless world portrayed in the popular book series and film *The Hunger Games*. Another common source of anxiety referenced on mortarboards is student debt, as when one graduate prominently displayed the words "Game of Loans," adapting the title of the popular book series and television show *Game of Thrones*. In 2012, as part of an organized protest against the rising rates of student loans, graduates from universities across the country used their mortarboards to display how much they owed in student loans. Some also decorated their caps with plastic balls and chains to symbolize the effects this debt would have on their futures (Rema 2012).

The themes that I identified above are by no means comprehensive, nor are they mutually exclusive. Often, decorated mortarboards engage with many of these themes at once. For example, one New York University graduate decorated her cap with a large, bulky model of a computer, representing her master's degree in digital imaging and design, and a piggy bank, representing her loans. In effect, her decorated mortarboard became a richly multivocal text communicating pride and anxiety, specific group affiliations, and her humorous personality. Whether graduates decorate their mortarboards in ways that reinforce or speak back to the vision of higher education that is central to the ritual of commencement, this essay has shed light on the ways in which individuals use this reflexive and playful genre of creative expression to fashion (quite literally) their personal engagement with the ideas of self, community, education, and the unknown future.

Sheila Bock was trained in Folklore at The Ohio State University, where she received her PhD from the Department of English in 2010. She is currently an Assistant Professor of Interdisciplinary Studies at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

Works Cited

Bronner, Simon. 2012. *Campus Traditions: Folklore from the Old-Time College to the Modern Mega-University*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi.

Magolda, Peter Mark. 2003. "Saying Good-Bye: An Anthropological Examination of a Commencement Ritual." *Journal of College Student Development.* 44(6): 779-796.

Nathan, Rebekah. 2005. *My Freshman Year: What a Professor Learned by Becoming a Student*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Rahman, Rema. 2012. "College Students Protest Debt at Graduation." *The Denver Post*. 11 May 2012. Web. http://www.denverpost.com/klis/ci_20602306/cu- students-protest-looming-debt-at-commencement.
SarahSmiles 365. 2011. "Top it off with a CREATIVE Graduation Cap…" *Sara Smiles: My Life in Words and Photographs*. 16 December 2011. Web. http://sarasmiles365.wordpress.com/2011/12/16/top-it-off-with-a-custom-graduation-cap/
Turner, Victor. 1967. "Betwixt and Between: The Liminal Period in *Rites de Passage*." In*The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual*, edited by Victor Turner, 93-111. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
van Gennep, Arnold. 1960. *The Rites of Passage*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Classroom Application: Ritual Clothing and Adornment

To design a ritual documentation project, here are questions to select or adapt according to curricular needs.

In what rituals have you participated? (Examples might include christening or naming ceremonies, bar or bat mitzvahs, weddings, or ceremonies marking grade level transitions.)

What ritual would you like to document?

Does it occur at a special time or season?

Where does it occur? Is it religious?

What do people wear?

How do they wear their hair?

Do they use special objects?

What do the dress and adornment mean to the wearer?

Do dress and adornment differ for men and women, for age groups, for those who have different roles in the ritual?

Rites of passage are universal yet unique to each cultural group. Investigating rituals helps students to recognize moments of importance in people's lives and find meaning in the stages of their own and others' lives. Rituals occur in special times and spaces and involve special clothing and adornment as well. In her article, Sheila Bock describes how graduates use mortarboards to mark transitions, connect with others, acknowledge challenges, and thank supporters. In addition to observing rituals in their personal lives, young people participate in an array of transitions in school, from kindergarten "100 day parades" to graduation. Assigning a documentation project for students to observe how ritual clothing and adornment contribute to personal and cultural identity deepens literacy skills for all ages.

Rites of Passage Resources

The *Louisiana Voices* Cycle of Life unit features three lessons with worksheets and rubrics.
http://www.louisianavoices.org/Unit9/edu_unit9_p2.html

The 2004 *CARTS Newsletter* focused on teaching across curricula with the life cycle, see especially the essay by Steve Zeitlin, "Folk Customs of Passage."
http://locallearningnetwork.org/library/articles

Exploring Dress, Exploring Identity: An Assignment in Learning to See Cultural Identity through Aspects of Dress

by Willow G. Mullins

"How many of you are wearing jeans?" I asked. All but two students raised their hands. "How many of you are wearing or carrying some item with the name of this university on it?" All but one. "How many of you have a backpack with you?" Everyone. They laughed, a little self-consciously. "How did you know, when I walked in on the first day of class, that I was the professor? Probably because I wasn't dressed like you. I was wearing English Department Chic." They laughed at me, and we thought about what that phrase – English Department Chic – meant.

The third chapter of Maxine Hong Kingston's *Woman Warrior*, "Shaman," opens with a deep description of three scrolls, the last material documents of her mother's career as a doctor in China. They are further accompanied by a set of photographs, showing one parent or another in their past. Kingston ruminates on the faces, haircuts, and clothes, seeming to probe how they combine to make the people she thought she knew. These scrolls, with their strange smell and delicate feel, and photos offer Kingston a doorway into her mother's life and show her an aspect of her mother's identity that might seem divergent from the American laundries of Kingston's own childhood (1975:58-61).

Fashion historian Juliet Ash similarly finds that her understanding of her deceased husband takes on new shapes as she looks at his old ties. Her meditation about what those ties might have represented for him, how he embodied them, and how they now embody her memory of him, provide her with new insights about both the objects and the person who wore them. Ash explores the difference between clothes worn objectively and clothes worn subjectively, and how they come to represent a "possible variety of identities of people in the present," past, and future (1996:220). Both these writings encapsulate Marcel Proust's famous remark, "The past is hidden… beyond the reach of intellect – in some material object" (qtd. in Kirchsenblatt-Gimblett 1989:330). Both demonstrate the ability of objects to hold meaning: meaning that both incorporates and goes beyond the sum of its material parts; meaning unlocked through close observation.

Building from these readings and many more, from across costume, English, folklore, anthropology, archeology, and art history, I have long used material culture generally and dress, or photos of dress, specifically to encourage students to look at a single object more closely. Through their looking, I ask them to encounter their own cultural identities as cradled within this one small thing. In brief, the assignment works like this: Students are asked to choose either an article of clothing that has been around their family for a while or a photograph that shows them or a family member wearing some specific article of clothing they wish to research. They are then asked to describe the article in as much close detail as possible and to guess at materials and how it was made. Moving a little further back, they must describe who wore it, for what occasions, and why. Stepping back again, they situate the article into larger ideas about family, fashion, and cultural norms. Finally, they must write a paper summarizing what they have found and exploring how that single item of clothing may be both a product of a culture and an individualized, creatively used marker of their own cultural identity.

I set the stage by bringing a set of objects into class and placing them at the front of the classroom for the first half of class while we discuss other things. The objects become mysterious as they sit there unreferenced, and few of us can resist a good mystery. Finally, the students divide into groups and spend ten minutes discussing an assigned object. Some objects are obvious – a scarf or a set of pens in a case. Some are less so – a clip for pinning cloth diapers, a bat for a game played only in Ireland. Each group then presents their object. What is it made from? What do they think it is? How did they come to that conclusion? What kind of person might own this object? What might the object mean to them? These last two questions require the students to think about what they know about the world around them. After they present, I offer the story of each object. Did they notice that the bat had been chewed on by a child? Did they notice the Russian words on the bottom of the pen case? The scarf, with its old-fashioned floral print and stamped with "Liberty" in the corner, clearly belonged to someone older. Sometimes they guess a grandmother (they are right), and sometimes they suspect that it was for more special occasions. The size and pattern alert them to how it might be worn, around the shoulders or over the head. Occasionally, they know Liberty of London as a brand and draw conclusions about wealth and travel.

At the end of this class, the students are given their assignment: Choose an item of dress or a photograph and using the kind of thick description we performed in class, investigate how that object embodies some aspect of its owner or wearer *and a cultural group to which they belong*. There are parameters for their object: Upon first glance, it must be something "important" to them or to someone they know well; upon second glance, it must be something that inspires questions about who made it or how it was acquired or who owned it or what happened to it. It must, in short, be something that they find themselves returning to, that begs to be looked at again. For this reason, I suggest that they will be more successful with everyday clothes, like Ash's husband's ties, or casual snapshots of daily life. Clothing for special events, like wedding dresses or festival clothing, may offer obvious interpretations, but they rarely give us much insight into the specific identity of the wearer.

Following this in-class project, we explore a variety of readings that offer examples of such thick description of objects, from Kingston and Ash to Roland Barthes' *Camera Lucida*. The specific readings depend on the class itself. Kingston or Eudora Welty's *One Writer's Beginnings* work well in an English or composition class; Barbara Kirschenblatt-Gimblett's "Objects of Memory" or Henry Glassie's *The Potter's Art* for folklore; Noliwe Rooks' "Nappi by Nature" or Sharon Hepburn's "The Cloth of Barbaric Pagans" for politics of dress. For a more advanced seminar, I might suggest that they each find an article in the journal *Fashion Theory* to present to the class. Between art history, textiles, and anthropology, in particular, the options for readings can easily be tailored to fit class themes and student interests.

If a model is helpful, we build from E. McClung Fleming's "Artifact Study: A Proposed Model" (1974). Fleming, an art historian at the Winterthur Museum, hoped to provide a classification system for material culture artifacts, categorizing them according to history, material, construction, design, and function. To arrive at these classifications, Fleming describes four operations that form the basis of object analysis: identification (What is it?); evaluation (How does it compare to others of its type?); cultural analysis (What would it have meant to the person or cultural group who originally might have owned it?); and interpretation (How does it have meaning now?). Like Fleming, art historian Jules Prown describes another system of object identification, similarly moving from close description to interpretive analysis, a method more rooted in the theory of art history (Prown and Haltman 2000). Prown offers a space for pure speculation before using research to bring ideas about the object back to earth. Such speculation allows the students to take their deductions based on their close descriptions and run with them: What might this article of clothing have meant? Where might it have been worn and why? It can give them an imaginative space to consider themselves in the wearer's position and try to envision how that item speaks to the wearer's identity. It allows them to ask, what kind of person would I be if I wore this piece regularly? And in asking that question, it fosters a kind of empathy for the wearer.

While performing close description and analysis works much like the popular advertising assignment used in many composition classes to foster close reading and analytical skills, advertising images are the carefully constructed work of a team of designers who intend to manipulate the audience. Ultimately, their task is to sell a product by playing on viewers' sense of themselves.

Without training in visual and popular culture and an awareness of the advertising industry, students can feel overwhelmed or miss important age, culture, gender, or race specific cues. Asking students to perform similar analysis on a material text, an article of clothing, or a photograph, however, can reach across cultural barriers, empowering students to look further into their own pasts, their stories, and the stories of those around them.

Fleming and Prown offer students a pathway into their chosen object. In having to provide a more in-depth process of identification, sometimes accompanied by drawings of the object, the students must move beyond simple statements like "it's a scarf" to seeing the meaning in the details, "it's a large, square silk scarf with a handsewn hem, densely printed with flowers in red and blue, and stamped with 'Liberty' in one corner." For writing students, these descriptions require them to be specific and hone their exposition; for folklore and textiles students, the descriptions encourage them to look at small details that may reveal important information, like an alteration or stain or evidence of wear. For all of us, such close reading mimics the kind of close attention and analysis we must bring to work successfully with academic materials. In effect, I ask them to perform the same kind of "thick description" of an article of dress that Clifford Geertz advocates for ethnographic events as a way to work toward cultural understanding. Like Geertz's thick description, the students' observations become raw materials in themselves for their own explorations of how that object provides a portal into understanding their identities.

The meat of students' work on their chosen objects lies in how they address Fleming's last two operations – the meaning of the object to the owner and the meaning of the object to the students themselves and how those meanings reference and contain larger cultural narratives. These questions get to the heart of how objects and meaning play off one another to display and, perhaps eventually, co-create identity. In addressing these questions, students begin to see not only the stories that such small items contain but also how they are constantly negotiating and reflecting their own identities through what they wear. A student who chose to write about his old, battered

baseball cap, for instance, ended up exploring how fans who support a perpetually losing team may develop stronger community bonds than those whose team regularly wins because of the depth of the identification.

To get at these narratives, I encourage students to look at many sources for comparisons and context. Anything from old fashion magazines to archival photographs to interviews with family members are fair game. Interviews can be particularly useful, as students might tap larger family stories in asking for memories about a single item. Most poignantly, one student who began with a photograph of her father as a child ended up hearing for the first time why the photographs in his family seemed to stop for several years during his childhood – they were lost when troops burned their house during a civil war. Suddenly, her own deep commitment to international human rights and chosen career path in law began to make sense to her as her family filled in their history.
Throughout this process, I continue to use one of the objects from that first in-class project. Drawing on my grandmother's scarf, an item I now regularly wear, I can demonstrate how this seemingly small item contains both larger narratives about nostalgia, fashion, femininity, and global travel, as well as smaller, more personal narratives about who my grandmother was, who I am, and what it means for me to incorporate an article of her dress from the 1950s into my own today.

This assignment rests on strong theoretical underpinnings from across disciplines, which can be engaged in as befits the course. Reading theory in the context of such a hands-on assignment works in both directions: It can make the theory itself feel more relevant by showing how it applies to students' daily lives and also reveal how students' daily lives and the objects they surround themselves with work within larger cultural systems. The connection between dress and identity is hardly new, and many writers have examined the ability of objects and dress to provide pathways into identity. Thus, a large repository of scholarship exists for students to draw upon as they think through their own projects. Many of these writings develop from symbolic interaction. In the 1950s, sociologist Herbert Blumer, building on the work of George Herbert Mead, defined symbolic interaction as the way that people define themselves and the world around them through their interactions with one another. In turn, people express their identities through mutually agreed upon forms of communication, verbal and nonverbal, and, most crucially, dress, as Gregory Stone described in 1962. By the early 1990s, symbolic interaction had become one of the major theories used and explored in the fields of textiles and dress by scholars such as Joanne Eicher and Mary Ellen Roach-Higgins, and it has remained central to textile study since. For example, Emma Tarlo's *Clothing Matters: Dress and Identity in India* examines the cultural and political implications of individual dress in a post-colonial setting. Anthropology and history also rely on such linking of meaning and objects. James Deetz's *In Small Things Forgotten* beautifully describes the mine of cultural information gleaned from archeological objects, for example, while cultural anthropologist Igor Kopytoff and sociologist Mihaly Czikszentmihaly also have written on the meanings of the everyday objects.

In performing Fleming's last two functions, the meaning of the object to the maker/wearer and the meaning to us now, students must delve into the original cultural context of their object and see how culture and the expression of identity have shifted over time, subjects much discussed in visual culture studies and art history. In doing so, they deploy Michael Baxandall's concept of the "period eye," which sought to describe how an artist's (or wearer's) culture shapes what they produce. Similarly, students tap into Jonathan Crary's ideas about the interrelationship between what we see and the available technology. As we contextualized the photos and clothing, we think about the current trend of dressing up for "selfies" and the presentation of identity on the Internet. We are inclined to see such carefully crafted self-presentation as a modern phenomenon. However, Joan Severa's *Dressed for the Photographer,* a collection of 19th-century photographs, suggests a history

as long as photography itself, and, if we look to studies of portraiture, perhaps longer. Other connections with theory abound, from memory studies like Ash and Barthes to discussions of how gender, race, and class become embodied through dress. Thus, such theory, which can feel remote to students, becomes more accessible, and they begin to see how they are already engaged with it.

This idea of using close visual description as a pathway into both identity and culture, while discussed here as a classroom assignment, can be adapted to other environments, such as museum exhibits. To use Juliet Ash's terms, many exhibits use clothing objectively. The clothing stands in for a group of people, symbolized most typically through festival or special occasion dress. Yet the individual narrative can make the representative article of dress into something more. For example, I once watched visitors at a display of one of the early astronaut's spacesuits at a science museum. While it spoke of technology and the space race, most of the visitors seemed more interested in the astronaut's own description of wearing the suit and what it meant to him. It mattered that it had been worn. Finding ways to connect clothing to personal narrative, to make it subjective, can provide visitors with that same sense of how clothing can encapsulate the fluid connection between individual identity and cultural identity.

The dress and identity assignment can prove one of the most interesting and thoughtful of the semester. It combines both detailed microanalysis of a single object in one single moment and larger, macro-level concerns of cultural structures and norms. It encourages students to make connections between their own lives and their academic work, as they move into the larger cultural narratives. Most importantly, it gives students a chance to see value in their own lives and families, to see how they use and remake culture through their identities, and to take pride in what they wear, even if it is simply a pair of jeans.

Willow G. Mullins *has a background in textile conservation and folklore. The author of a book on felt, her current work focuses on how people make meaning of objects, culturally and economically, and folklore theory. She currently teaches at Washington University in St. Louis.*

Works Cited

Ash, Juliet. 1996. "Memory and Objects." In *The Gendered Object*, ed. Pat Kirkham, 219-24. Manchester: University of Manchester Press.

Barthes, Roland. 1981. *Camera Lucida.* New York: Hill and Wang.

Baxandall, Michael. 1988. *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth-Century Italy: A Primer in the Social History of Pictorial Style.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Blumer, Herbert. 1986. *Symbolic Interactionism: Perspective and Method*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Crary, Jonathan. 1992. *Techniques of the Observer.* Cambridge: MIT Press.

Deetz, James. [1977] 1996. *In Small Things Forgotten: An Archeology of Early American Life.* New York: Anchor Books.

Fleming, E. McClung. 1974. "Artifact Study: A Proposed Model." *Winterthur Portfolio*, Vol. 9: 153-173.

Geertz, Clifford. 1973. "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretative Theory of Culture." In *The Interpretation of Cultures,* 3-30. New York: Basic Books.

Glassie, Henry. 2000. *The Potter's Art.* Bloomington: University of Indiana Press.

Hepburn, Sharon. 2000. "The Cloth of Barbaric Pagans: Tourism, Identity, and Modernity in Nepal." *Fashion Theory,* Vol. 4, No. 3 (August): 275-299.

Kingston, Maxine Hong. 1975. *The Woman Warrior*. New York: Vintage.

Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Barbara. 1989. "Objects of Memory: Material Culture as Life Review." In *Folk Groups and Folklore Genres*, ed. Elliott Oring, 329-38. Logan: Utah State University Press.

Prown, Jules David and Kenneth Haltman. 2000. *American Artifacts*: *Essays in Material Culture*. Lansing:

Michigan State University Press
Rooks, Noliwe. 1996. "Nappi by Nature: Afros, Hot Combs, and Black Pride." In *Hair-Raising: Beauty, Culture, and African-American Women,* 1-22. Rutgers: Rutgers University Press.
Severa, Joan. 1997. *Dressed for the Photographer: Ordinary Americans and Fashion, 1840-1900.* Kent: Kent State University Press.
Stone, Gregory. 1962. "Appearance and the Self." In *Human Behavior and the Social Processes: An Interactionist Approach*, ed. Arnold M. Rose, 86-118. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
Tarlo, Emma. 1996. *Clothing Matters: Dress and Identity in India.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
Welty, Eudora. 1983. *One Writer's Beginnings*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

On Tattoos and Tangents: Discussing Research in the Classroom

by Martha C. Sims

During the past few years, I have been researching tattoos. The idea began with a question volleyed across the room from one student to another in the final minutes before one of my college composition classes began.

> *"I got a tattoo this weekend."*
>
> *"What does it say?"*

What does it say? My question would have been, "What's it a tattoo of?" That question soon after morphed into another question for me: Why are so many people being tattooed with words—and often with words alone? What happened to the artistry of the image, the symbols?

In composition classes in which folklore or culture is the content focus, tattooing is one of the first topics I throw into the mix for discussion. As a contemporary cultural practice, it is a subject students are immediately able to talk about, regardless of their attitudes about the custom. Discussion might begin with students bringing up stereotypes, which can easily be challenged by their classmates—whether by a student orally presenting an argument or showing her tattoo. I often find myself not having to assert any teacher's authority to challenge those stereotypes.

One beauty of the subject is that it is not perceived as sacred or antiquated. It is raw and real enough to interest students, so sometimes it takes a while for them to realize that they are participating in an academic discussion. Often, it is not until I step in and begin noting on the board the territory we have covered, writing out the primary concepts the students themselves have brought out in their discussion, that they recognize the fruits of their analytical labor.

They are practicing critical-thinking strategies and beginning to articulate what can be significant about cultural practices, what misperceptions we harbor about physical presentation and

aesthetics, and how consciously or unconsciously members of different groups express identity through these permanent marks on their bodies. Through this process, they are beginning to understand how tradition and folklore are not just quilts and fairytales. They are also beginning to understand how research and academic arguments can be grounded in their own questions and ideas.

In teaching about research and writing, about exploring and expanding theories, I have found the topic of tattoos to be fruitful in many ways. It is certainly an effective icebreaker with my college students, yet it serves as more once students realize that tattoos have been a legitimate subject of study for me—and can be for them, too. As my own questions about text-based tattoos have grown into a research subject, I have integrated more discussion of tattoos and tattooing into my classes, and the subject has become a vehicle for illustrating the breadth of research available in studying folklore. One of the most powerful aspects of this topic is how it opens up many avenues for discussion and allows for a variety of approaches to research. The class shifts to the broader focus of body modification and cultural implications, the similarities and differences of various modifications and practices.

Classroom Connections

Question: *What examples can we discover where different body aesthetics and body modifications mean different things?*

For example, stereotypes of tattooed people in the U.S. continue to be somewhat negative, despite the changing perceptions occurring. Yet, in other cultures, especially historically, tattoos have been markers of higher status.

Discussion: *How does this author's opening anecdote help us understand the research process?*

What can we learn about formulating a good research question?

What are the steps to developing a good research plan for local culture topics?

Opportunities and Obstacles Inherent in Folklore Research Using tattoos as a topic, I present students a hypothetical research situation: If you were planning on researching tattoos, what would you need to know before you went into the field? Students brainstorm (in small groups or as the entire class, with me as their secretary) and discover that their own experiences, attitudes, and questions shape what they need to know. Do they want background information on apprenticing or the artistic and technical process because they want to study artists? Would some knowledge of cultural symbols or phrases be useful? Would it be beneficial to know more about perceptions of tattoos in particular organized religions? Then we consider what research techniques will provide the proper tools to address the questions: use of standard research databases on history, on art, on culture or conversations with people who have tattoos or don't. As the course moves forward, I handle other stages of the process similarly. When we discuss researcher ethics and rapport, we again take the hypothetical approach, selecting a number of different types of members of the tattoo community and considering how best to approach them and build rapport. This then leads to ways of developing interview questions and considering how to follow up interviews, whether performing additional interviews, returning to library research, redirecting the inquiry, or a combination of these strategies.

For students unfamiliar with ethnographic research, study of contemporary tattoos and tattooing provides a concrete example. Students can see the interconnections among folklore genres as we consider how people's beliefs and identities are expressed through the words and images with which their flesh is adorned.

We discuss ways to approach research beginning with selecting a tattoo parlor to document or interviewing peers or family about their tattoos. Making such choices suggests a direction: Is the researcher interested more in the perspective of the artist than the tattooee? I explain to my students that my initial research on text-based tattoos was with tattooees. I interviewed them about their tattoos to learn more about why they selected the words they did and why they chose words instead of images. That phase of my research provided me the tattoo images themselves as well as narratives about their significance to the tattooees. One of the complicating ideas that developed from that research was an understanding that despite my perception about tattooees intending people to read and interpret their tattoos, some of my consultants said the words were only for themselves. This shift in my perception changed my notion about the-body-as-canvas and introduced a more complex discourse of tattoos and adornment. The lines of public and private expression were blurred.

Explaining this shift in my perspective illustrates for students the way research unfolds and can change not only a researcher's original assumptions but also a researcher's approach. For a researcher, what seems to be a single shift in perspective can become still more complex. As I explain to my students, once I began thinking about the relationship between the tattooee and those who see the tattoos (or don't), my questions turned to the artist. How much is the artist involved in helping the tattooee express herself? I reflected on how carefully I had searched for an artist to create my tattoos and how concerned I had been about the collaborative nature of that process. That personal experience compelled me to incorporate research with the artists into my process.

Somewhere in the middle of the ethnographic work with these two groups lies the tattoo itself, the material object around which these various folk congregate. Considering the meaning of the tattoo, students can discuss different research strategies and the theories that can be used to analyze the tattoo. One researcher might look at symbology, combining library research with fieldwork to understand what particular images have conveyed historically and how they have been altered or appropriated. Another might interview artists about their design training and processes. Regardless, taking this approach to the research, the art can take center stage.

Discussion of the study of tattoos and tattooing provides a framework that can be applied to studies of various types of adornment. As students explore the ways in which these aesthetic choices reflect and affect cultural expression, they are exposed to the approaches folklorists use in research and can begin to develop and apply their own theories about societal attitudes based on how individuals present themselves in public.

Martha C. Sims *teaches composition and introductory folklore at The Ohio State University and often includes elements of folklore methodology as part of the palette of research strategies that she teaches her composition students. She continues to be both fascinated and sometimes surprised by what she learns about culture from her students.*

Local Learning Focus: The Will to Adorn Project

Engaging and Connecting Youth through Community Based Cultural Research and Presentation

by Diana Baird N'Diaye

Photo by Sharon Farmer, Courtesy of the National Museum of African American History and Culture, Smithsonian Institution

Zora Neale Hurston, the renowned anthropologist and folklorist, observed in 1934 that "the will to adorn" is one of the primary characteristics of African American expression. Like orature, quilting, and musical forms such as the blues, African American dress and body adornment are creative expressions grounded in the history of African-descended populations in the United States. They have been shaped by the legacies of slavery, the Civil Rights Movement, and more recent African diasporas. They reveal continuities of ideas, values, skills, and knowledge rooted on the African continent and in the American experience. Most importantly, dress and body adornment are "cultural markers"—aspects of visual culture through which people communicate their self-definitions, the communities with which they identify, their creativity, and their style.

--The Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage Website

The Will to Adorn is a project that began with the idea to work with scholars, educators, students, and cultural practitioners to document the arts of everyday dressing. Dress represents a multifaceted aesthetic tradition closely related to identity, but not often recognized as an art form. Yet, we asked ourselves: What art could be more intimately related to our social and cultural identities then what we wear, how we choose to style our hair, and modify our bodies? What art could be more accessible? In fact, the expressive culture (art form) that is perhaps most closely related to dress is foodways. Everybody needs to eat and everybody gets dressed. What folklorists and other cultural researchers often call the body arts are very personal modes of

expression but are also very much connected to a sense of belonging and to the values and beliefs that give meaning to our lives. We present ourselves to others first through the way we dress so the dress arts are both modes of nonverbal communication and performances of our identities. We are all dress artists.

In 2010, the Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage (CFCH) initiated a research and community engagement project by reaching out to community and academic-based researchers, educators, and cultural practitioners. Entitled The Will to Adorn: African American Dress and the Aesthetics of Identity, the initiative focuses on the diversity of African American identities as communicated through the cultural aesthetics and arts of the body, dress, and adornment. It also creates a framework to engage scholars, students, and educators in studying dress as a form of expressive culture shared by communities. The project is grounded in cultural autobiographies of dress. That is to say, the research starts with researchers looking at how they developed their own dress styles as well as the values, beliefs, and skills that determine the way they dress. By asking questions about our own "dressways," museum, academic, and community scholars, cultural practitioners, and school-aged youth collaboratively delve into the community influences on the ways we think about how we present ourselves and our relationships to others through clothing, hair, and personal adornment.

Dress as Autobiography

Given that one of the premises of the Will to Adorn Project is the idea of cultural autobiography, I thought it was appropriate that I share the story of my relationship to dress. I grew up in a family in which dressing well was both an art form and a form of protection. In an age of segregation as a family of African descent in the United States in the 1950s and 1960s, my parents deemed it important for us always to be dressed well. After all, we were always being judged by our appearance on the basis of our skin color and the texture of our hair, no matter what we wore. My mother took pride in dressing us as "little princesses" in the best she could afford and had tremendous skill in finding high-quality clothes at a fraction of their retail cost. My father recounts that as a student working his way through graduate school at Columbia University as a hospital orderly he always wore a suit to class. Our family was not alone as African Americans with this consciousness of the messages communicated through dress. It is significant that during the struggle for civil rights in the 1960s marchers and those engaged in civil disobedience were instructed to wear their Sunday best.

The author's mother in a photograph taken in the late 1940s.

My understanding of dress as an art form came as a result of conversations around the dinner table and because many people in my family were what we have come to call "artisans of style." My mother was a wonderful dresser and taught us to shop for style and value. She was also trained as a hairstylist and apprenticed with an older cousin when she first came to this country as an immigrant from Guyana. As a child growing up on the island of Bermuda, my mom paid for sewing

lessons at Ms. Francis' school because she felt that every young girl should learn to sew. In later years when she opened a dry cleaning business my afternoon chores in the family business consisted of fixing zippers, taking up hems, and other such repairs. So my first grounding in dressways was as an apprentice in the arts of community style.

An early appreciation for dress as an art form also came from attendance and participation in what I like to call visual concerts. Churches, schools, and community organizations offer opportunities for people to show off their personal collections of clothing, sense of style, and movement through fashion shows that, like musical concerts, provide entertainment and often raise funds for a common cause. Some of these events are organized by local designers who then use models from the neighborhood or the congregation. These visual concerts are a long-standing tradition in African American communities crossing boundaries of ethnicity, faith, and class and generation. At 85 years old, my mother still modeled in fashion shows organized by Bishops Old Girls Association (her Guyanese high school alumni organization) in the United States. More recently, the Will to Adorn Project documented the annual millinery fashion show of the Alfred Street Baptist Church in Alexandria, Virginia, that featured the work of 98-year-old milliner Mae Reeves along with hats from the personal collections of the parishioners.

Rosemarie Reed Miller (2002) has written a biography of Zelda Wynn Valdez and other African American designers in a book suitable for high school readers.

Zelda Wynn Valdez
Courtesy of Dance Theater of Harlem Archives

Fashion design was my first choice of occupation and I had the good fortune to have wonderful teachers both in my high school and in a community arts program in Harlem. My teacher in the Harlem Program, Zelda Wynn Valdez was an outstanding African American independent designer who created clothing in her salon, on 57th Street and Broadway in New York, for Dianne Carroll, Eartha Kitt, Mae West, Gladys Knight and other glamorous performers. She is also credited with designing the first Playboy Bunny outfit. Ms. Wynn instructed her students in the arts of draping, pattern making and sewing—and in the occupational culture of couture as well. As students we modeled our creations at community events and at the 1967 World's Fair. I was on the path to becoming an "artisan of style" that would become a lifelong journey.

Nevertheless, a series of chance encounters and my parents' strong desire for me to get an academic degree led me into anthropology rather than taking on a fashion design major in college—New York University's Washington Square College, where I was admitted, did not have fashion design as an option so I ended up taking anthropology to learn about the clothing of the world. Although immersed in liberal arts training, I longed to get back to design and when I had the opportunity to begin a master's program in industrial design at the Pratt Institute I jumped at the chance. I was delighted to discover an entirely new approach to

thinking and learning.

In design school, the primary aim was to develop a new set of critical-thinking skills. Scientists had the scientific method—creating a hypothesis, testing that hypothesis through research and sometimes fieldwork, analyzing the data, and either confirming the hypothesis or coming to new conclusions based on the disproved hypothesis. As an aspiring designer, I learned another set of thinking skills that allowed students to solve problems in the real world. These skills also included visual literacy. The problem-solving aspect of design has been called design thinking. Although the steps of the process have been defined with slight variations, they include defining a problem, researching its contours, brainstorming solutions, creating a prototype, choosing the best of the solutions, implementing or creating, and learning from the creation to define new problems (Rowe 1987).

Folklore and anthropology provide entry points to the study of dress as visual culture, a subject that has become an interdisciplinary field of its own (Mirzoeff 1998). In the Will to Adorn students find ways to think about the cultural expressions related to community dress and style that are meaningful to them and identify those passed on from one person to another person in informal ways. Learning to document the culture in dress working within and *with* communities allows students to become agents of their own knowledge. We are pleased that the *Journal of Folklore and Education* focused upon some of the methodologies and the framework for the Will to Adorn Project, and we looking forward to hearing more about how teachers, students, folklorists, community scholars, and artisans of style can create meaningful classroom moments together as they think about dress and culture.

A Collaborative Pedagogy

While still an undergraduate, I read the work of Paolo Friere, who wrote that:

> Through dialogue, the teacher-of-the-students and the students-of-the teacher cease to exist and a new term emerges: teacher-student with student-teachers. The teacher is no longer

Addressing Educational Standards

The Common Core State Standards stress that students "need the ability to gather, comprehend, evaluate, synthesize, and report on information and ideas, to conduct original research in order to answer questions or solve problems, and to analyze and create a high volume and extensive range of print and nonprint texts in media forms old and new" to be ready for college, work, and life in a "technological society" (2010:4).

A folklore-based program like the Will to Adorn can help students achieve college and career readiness by exposing them to alternate worldviews in their own communities. By offering youth the opportunity to prepare for and conduct interviews with artisans in their communities, the project necessarily requires youth to strengthen their ability to analyze written and oral histories, to discern themes within and across interviews, to learn about different vernaculars used to describe the body arts, to write routinely over the duration of the project, and to present informative summaries of complex themes and vocabulary to an audience in a professional setting. All these skills align with the goals of the standards for middle and high school students (2010:39-47).

According to the handbook *Folk Arts in Education*, "students practice a number of vital technical and academic skills during a community video project," skills that involve "decoding and word meaning…technical media details, team work or interpersonal relations, performance/public speaking, attention to detail, analysis of oral and written literature… research/planning, critical and analytical thinking… creative /artistic development, [and] language arts" (2008:8).

> merely the one who teaches, but one who is himself taught in dialogue with the students, who in turn while being taught also teach. They become jointly responsible for a process in which all grow. (1970:67)

Friere's ideas about collaborative learning and teaching, how people in disenfranchised communities could learn literary skills, as they created reading materials based on their own experiences, were very important to the development of the methodology for the Will to Adorn and for other projects that I've developed. What remains powerful to me in the Will to Adorn project, inspired by Friere's work, is the validating impact of community and student agency in creating knowledge by documenting and interpreting the shared culture of everyday dress.

We recognize that much directed learning takes place in community settings and venues that offer the flexibility to design curricula that are complementary and supportive of curriculum standards. We also explicitly seek to reach young people for whom the formal classroom is not the learning space one reason or another. These include youth from alternative high schools, heritage schools, faith-based groups, and programs for adjudicated individuals.

In 2013, CFCH used a combination of online venues, new media, and hands-on workshops at the Smithsonian Folklife Festival to take to wider scale this successful program. The project continues to take advantage of new documentation tools such as mobile technology and social media to build 21st century cultural, social, and technical competencies grounded in core skills of literacy, problem solving, critical analysis, and research consistent with education standards. The involvement of partners representing different regions, cultural communities, and age groups is critical to the project's commitment to identifying, documenting, and representing a range of perspectives and approaches related to dress and adornment.

The Importance of Teacher Training

Lisa Falk, Arizona State Museum Director of Community Engagement and Partnerships and contributor to the Smithsonian's *Bermuda Connections* guide, emphasizes the correlation between teachers' investment in folklore projects and the success of the project in the classroom: "[T]he surprise is how something that to me is so obvious – looking at and working with community – is such a new concept to teachers and how excited they become once they do their own mini-fieldwork projects and class presentations. This work creates the difference between liking an idea and adopting and using it back in the classroom" (2004:13).

Falk speaks directly to how important teacher training is for getting research-based folklore programs implemented in classrooms. If teachers are given the opportunity to examine their own relationships to their communities, they will be more likely to continue using these techniques in their classrooms, and will ultimately become better equipped to help their students engage with their own identities and communities.

As educators, studying dress in the classroom or in the community offers wonderful ways to engage students in learning the arts of cultural documentation and analysis of visual culture. Over the five years of the project, we have found that examining dress captures both the imagination of young people and members of the community whom they interview. In interviews completed for the Will to Adorn Project, we hear over and over again from experienced artisans of style about their concerns regarding passing on their skills to new generations and about how meaningful it was to have those skills (including design and entrepreneurial skills) recognized by young people. The pedagogical roots of the Will to Adorn Project are many. They begin with lessons learned from elders at home and in community settings.

Alignment with Critical 21st Century Learning Skills

The Will to Adorn Project addresses virtually all 21st century learning skills (see Jenkins 2006), with particular emphasis upon:

Distributed Cognition: Learners learn to use common tools, such as smartphones, apps, social media, visual search technology, and webinars "that expand mental capacities."
Collective Intelligence: The Will to Adorn website is built around learning to pool knowledge and compare notes with others toward a common goal.
Transmedia Navigation: Learners use different media resources while processing and presenting their research in public, real-time venues.
Networking: Learners gain the ability to search for, synthesize, and disseminate information in the course of preparing for fieldwork interviews by reading and writing blog entries based on their interviews.
Negotiation: Learners interact across diverse generational, ethnic, gender, faith, regional, and occupational communities to document, present, and share their research.

Conclusion

The Smithsonian's Will to Adorn initiative seeks to understand the relationship between community, identity and the aesthetics of dress. As the research of over four years is affirming, the arts of dress and adornment in African American culture signify more than just a statement of personal taste or a sense of style; they can be understood as examples of artistic expression and mastery. The sheer variety of community dress and body art traditions demonstrates the rich heterogeneity and complexity of the African American population. The Will to Adorn celebrates individual expression and creativity, but it also focuses on the details and conventions of social dressing that define what it means to be well-dressed or appropriately attired in different communities.

Diana Baird N'Diaye, *PhD, is a curator and cultural heritage specialist at the Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage. She conceived and directs the Smithsonian initiative "The Will to Adorn: African American Dress and the Aesthetics of Identity." Her training in anthropology, folklore, and visual studies and years of experience as a museum educator and researcher working within public schools, along with her lifelong study of the arts of adornment as a designer and studio artist have supported over 30 years of fieldwork, including several award-winning exhibitions, educational programs, and publications.*

Will to Adorn **website for more information:**
http://www.festival.si.edu/2013/Will_to_Adorn

Works Cited

Falk, Lisa. 2004. *Bermuda Connections: A Cultural Resource Guide for Classrooms*. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution. http://www.folklife.si.edu/education_exhibits/resources/bermuda_connections.aspx#PDF

Friere, Paulo. 1970. The Pedagogy of the Oppressed. M. B. Ramos, Trans. New York: Herder and Herder.

Miller, Rosemary E. Reed. 2002. *The Threads of Time, the Fabric of History: Profiles of African American Dressmakers and Designers from 1850 to the Present,* 2nd Edition. Washington, DC: Toast and Strawberries Press.

Jenkins, Henry. 2006 Confronting the Challenges of Participatory Culture: Media Education of the 21st Century. http://www.nwp.org/cs/public/print/resource/2713

MacDowell, Marsha and LuAnne Kozma. 2008. *Folk Arts in Education: A Resource Handbook II.* Michigan State University Museum. www.folkartsineducation.org

Mirzoeff, Nicholas. 1998. *The Visual Culture Reader.* New York: Routledge

N'Diaye, Diana Baird. 2013. The Will to Adorn: African American Diversity, Style, and Identity. In *Smithsonian Folklife Festival Program Book*, 27-31. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution.

National Governors Association Center for Best Practices and Council of Chief State School Officers. 2010.

Common Core State Standards. Washington D.C.: National Governors Association Center for Best Practices and Council of Chief State School Officers. www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy
Partnership for 21st Century Skills http://www.p21.org
Rowe, Peter G. 1987. Design Thinking. Cambridge: The Massachussetts Institute of Technology Press.
Smithsonian Institution, Education and Outreach. 2013. *Youth Access Program Guidelines.* Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution.

Classroom Application: Writing a Sartorial Autobiography

The Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage developed a set of questions to inspire people to write sartorial autobiographies. Have students choose questions below to help write a life story about themselves or someone they interview about dress and culture. They may illustrate with photos and sketches.

***Definition**: Sartorial Autobiography looks at the clothes we wear to help shape the story of who we were when we wore them. Looking at photos and physical examples of our own clothing through different times provides insight in to our own story—our wardrobe reflects social history, culture, family traditions, and personal beliefs.*

Guiding Questions for a Sartorial Autobiography

How did family and friends talk about dress?

Were there any family sayings or words of wisdom passed on to you about dressing well?

How did you learn--through direct instruction, by implication, or example--what not to wear? Why?

Were there any special words that you used to describe the different styles of dress or particular items of dress?

When did you become aware of dress as a personal statement?

How has the way you dress (or style your hair) changed through the years? Why?

How many communities of style do you identify with? Describe them and the associated dress.

What are the "codes of dress" of your cultural communities, including your age group, family, or occupation?

What are your thoughts on the way that you dress in relation to the aesthetics (ideas and values of beauty) relating to dress of the communities with which you identify or those of the people that you respect and admire?

Have you ever been treated differently, embraced, or rejected in a way that you would attribute to the way you dress or dressed? Describe the context and the experience?

Are there articles of dress or personal adornment that hold special meaning for you and for those in your family and/or communities?

The Will to Adorn Youth Access Program

by Sally A. Van de Water

The Will to Adorn initiative has seen many iterations: fieldwork, satellite research projects and dissertations, youth presentations and projects, and, most spectacularly, the 2013 Smithsonian Folklife Festival program. Of these, however, the one that might show the most long-term difference is the Will to Adorn Youth Access Program, which has partnered with community organizations all over the country to engage young people in direct fieldwork in their communities.

Participants in the Dr. Beverly J. Robinson Community Folk Culture Internship Program at Mind-Builders Creative Arts Center in the Bronx, New York, interview master barber Dennis "Denny Moe" Mitchell about his two decades of experience.
Photo by Jade D. Banks

In 2010, inspired by a long working relationship and collegial goodwill, the Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage (CFCH) formalized its partnership with Mind-Builders Creative Arts Center in the Bronx, New York, and specifically with its Beverly J. Robinson Community Folk Culture Program. The Folk Culture Program, directed at the time by teaching artist and community scholar/lay folklorist Jade D. Banks, hired teen and young-adult interns for a period of months, usually during the summer, and trained them to do fieldwork: photo and video documentation, fieldnotes, interviewing, and more. In 2010 the Folk Culture Program started doing this work with a Will to Adorn focus. Teens produced thousands of gigabytes of data, hosted fashion shows, mini-exhibits, and presentation nights at local community venues, and, most importantly, began to see themselves as cultural practitioners with something to say.

Inspired by the success at Mind-Builders, the CFCH staff wished to expand the model. We received a 2013 grant from the Smithsonian's Youth Access Program, followed by a second grant in 2014, to partner with more organizations doing similar arts-and-culture work in communities. We were also able to build on a relationship with Debra Robinson, a teacher at an Atlanta-area high school who had worked on some of the early Will to Adorn fieldwork at Spelman College. These two anchor programs provided models for us when approaching prospective partners. Our target audiences remained middle- and high-school aged students and their educators. Since directed learning also takes place in community settings and venues that offer flexibility beyond the classroom, we primarily recruited in out-of-school settings.

By spring 2013, seven additional partners had been selected. They came to us by several methods: following recommendations of existing research partners, asking folklorists in specific communities for recommendations, and serendipity. These partners represent a broad range of programming and target audiences, including Title I and alternative schools, faith-based groups, arts and community organizations, urban youth-focused initiatives, and organizations working with adjudicated youth. The work in 2014 has focused upon developing and nurturing design thinking

while continuing to address competencies that have been identified as part of the core education standards, particularly literacy, analytic skills, writing, primary research skills, communication, and team work, as well as basic technical skills.

Now, what to do? We had chosen deliberately diverse organizations, each working with a slightly different target audience. After selecting these partners, CFCH invited all nine to Washington, DC, for intensive training in the midst of the 2013 Smithsonian Folklife Festival. Longtime Will to Adorn educators Jade D. Banks and Debra Robinson were joined by Bonnie Sunstein, author of *Fieldworking: Reading and Writing Research*, plus Lisa Rathje and Paddy Bowman of Local Learning. They each led workshop sessions covering an aspect of the project within their expertise. We worked with Jade to adapt Mind-Builders' lesson plans into a draft Will to Adorn curriculum, which we shared with the new partners. Following the workshop, eight organizations were able to extend their participation through the second week of the festival; youth participants from three organizations collaborated to document various aspects of the festival relating to dress and adornment. Spontaneous discussions throughout the festival days added to the group's understanding of the larger Will to Adorn initiative, and as they worked with each other they grew excited to begin their own projects upon returning to their home cities. For me, one of the most exciting aspects of the Youth Access Project was working with six former youth interns from New York and Atlanta, now aged 17 to 29, at the festival to help train and support the younger students.

The 2013 Will to Adorn Festival program showcased the distinctive ways in which diverse African American identities are expressed through attire and adornment. It explored the traditions, artistry, and social histories that have shaped these expressions. The program featured demonstrations and workshops by artisans such as milliners, hairdressers, jewelers, tailors, and ceremonial regalia makers. It presented performances by exemplars of styles such as musicians, dancers, activists, poets, athletes, and others.
Photo courtesy of the Smithsonian

Teachers and students can participate in the Will to Adorn Project by downloading the Will to Adorn App available for iPhone and iPad to contribute their own dress stories.

I'm thrilled that this inaugural edition of the *Journal of Folklore and Education* highlights several Youth Access partners' programs in the following pages. These organizations are doing profound work and making a difference in the lives of the young people they serve.

Sally A. Van de Water *has been at the Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage since early 2013, when she was hired to manage the Will to Adorn Youth Access Program. She was coordinator for the* 2013 Smithsonian Folklife Festival The Will to Adorn: African American Diversity, Style, and Identity *program and is project manager for CFCH's* symposium Intangible Cultural Heritage: An International Dialogue*. Ms. Van de Water has facilitated national meetings of cultural heritage professionals on behalf of the American Folklore Society, National Assembly of State Arts Agencies, and National Endowment for the Arts, and has a long history of managing public programs, cultural events, and public folklorists' convenings. She has an AB in Folklore and Folklife from Bryn Mawr College and an MA in Folk Studies from Western Kentucky University.*

Art of Style @ Jazz Fest

by Jenna Bonistalli and Elise Gallinot Goldman

Afterschool 5th- and 6th-grade students in KID smART classes at Akili Academy in New Orleans were part of the Smithsonian's Will to Adorn Youth Access Program during the 2013–14 school year. Over the course of the year, students studied adornment, style, and culture through the lens of the visual arts. In the fall semester, students created their own patterns, collages, and poetry. In the spring, they focused on learning about local artists by interviewing them about their craft and process. On May 2 the class took a fieldtrip to the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival to interview and document the artists and craftspeople who show and sell their work in the Congo Square Marketplace. We produced a video of the students in action at the festival to share with family and community members.

Watch the video to see how students learned from these artisans of style! (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kPr1tVw9LFQ)

Here is what the class wrote and said before showing the video at their afterschool showcase:

Le'Jean G.
Hi! We are representing the class "Art of Style." The Art of Style is about art you know and don't know. For example, all types of clothes are art. Look at your shoes, someone designed and made those! Even your body is art. Look around you, everything in this world is art. And, this is what Art of Style is about.

Paris M.
On Friday, May 2, our afterschool class took a trip to Jazz Fest. We went to Jazz Fest to learn about other people and the art they make. We met artists to see what they do for a living and what inspires them. Before we went, we came up with questions we might ask and different jobs for each member of our group to do while we were there. We practiced with the iPad, iPod, iPhone and recorder to prepare.

Sheltion B.
When we were at Jazz Fest, we learned about different cultures and personalities. For example, we met a jeweler named Baba, who lives in Atlanta, Georgia. He told us that "Dreams are real and the real are dreams." This relates to art because he says he dreams about art and then draws them out to make jewelry designs out of silver. That quote by Baba inspired me by encouraging me to succeed and be the best I can be.

For more photographs and information visit:
http://kidsmartnola.tumblr.com/tagged/will-to-adorn

Classroom Application: KID smART Student Interview Worksheet

Possible Questions for Artists

Your story:

- When did you know you wanted to be an artist?
- Were you a creative kid?
- Do you come from a family or community of artists?
- How long have you been making art?
- How did you become an artist?
- What else are you good at?
- How does your creativity reflect your culture?

Your process and inspiration:

- How do you decide what you are going to make?
- What are your inspirations?
- What are you trying to communicate in your artwork?
- How does your culture influence your artwork?
- How does where you come from influence or inspire your artwork?
- What does the word "adornment" mean to you?
- What do you hope people feel when they buy/wear your artwork?

Relevance:

- What are some important life lessons that the arts can offer?
- Is creativity based on talent or hard work?
- What is the best part about being an artist?
- What is the worst thing about being an artist?
- Can anyone become an artist?

Classroom Application: KID smART Student Jobs Worksheet

Organizer _____

- Holds bag and map
- Keeps track of time
- Gets all people interviewed/photographed to sign release

Greeter / Introducer _____

- Greets the artist
- Tells the artist about our project and why we're at Jazz Fest
- Says thank you
- Helps group to be kind and respectful

Photo / Video Manager _____

- Manages camera/video/audio equipment
- Takes turns with others/makes sure everyone has a chance
- Makes sure images are focused/clear
- Makes sure to have:
    - o Wide image of artist with their work, smiling
    - o Detail images of their work
    - o Some audio/video of them speaking

Lead Interviewer _____

- Asks thoughtful questions / follow-up questions
- Listens carefully
- Guides conversation
- Uses "Questions for Artists" as a guide

A Closer Look at AS220 Youth

by Anne Kugler

AS220 Youth is a free arts education program in Providence, Rhode Island, serving young people ages 14 to 21. AS220 Youth has three teaching sites: our downtown Providence studio, UCAP Middle School, and the Rhode Island Training School, the state's juvenile detention facility.

While our program is open to any young person with an interest in the arts, our goal is to engage youth in the child welfare and/or juvenile justice systems. Once youth begin attending the program regularly, they build an online portfolio. Youth portfolios can be viewed here: Youth.as220.org/portfolios.

After youth attain technical skills in an artistic medium, staff members link them with professional opportunities. These could include exhibiting art work in a gallery show, assisting on a commercial photo shoot, recording a mixtape in our studio, or performing with our hip hop dance troupe, 2legit.

In addition to after-school programming, AS220 Youth runs an Apprentice Program for young adults ages 17 to 21. Apprentices come to work each day and complete large-scale, collaborative projects that generate income for our studio.

AS220 Youth by the numbers

- 500 youth served each year at three teaching sites
- of these, 85 percent qualify for free or reduced lunch at their public schools
- one in three participants (33 percent) are, or were, in state care
- 28 youth hired as Studio Apprentices
- 54 hired in our summer jobs program

AS220 Youth as a Will To Adorn Youth Access Program

Will to Adorn's Program Coordinator, Sally Van de Water, and Curator, Diana Baird N'Diaye, invited AS220 Youth to Washington, DC, in July 2013 for an initial training on folklore and ethnographic research. AS220 representatives Charlene Wooten, Felicia Megginson, and Anne Kugler spent three days learning to use digital media to document "artisans of style" in our community. We integrated this folklore curriculum into existing photo and video production classes. Youth were asked to complete street photography projects, oral histories, and documentary videos. An example is this video on barbershops: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9CyeI3Fs0SM .

Because AS220 Youth has a long history of teaching photo and video, it was relatively easy for us to engage teens in that creative process. However, we didn't have any experience teaching folklore or anthropology fieldwork. We were challenged to engage youth in the historical and ethnographic research that adds depth and meaning to cultural studies.

Youth Engagement

In one of our Will to Adorn workshops, I was trying to engage youth in a conversation about something "old-fashioned," like why the distinctive African fabric is called Dutch Wax. They weren't so interested in the history but loved the gorgeous colors and patterns. The conversation quickly turned to buying fabric and making clothes, then showing them off. It seemed like everyone in the room had a secret desire to be a runway model! The idea of hiring a DJ and hosting a huge party really transformed our work with the Will to Adorn. The project suddenly felt more accessible and fun, and everyone could see themselves playing a role.

Many more young people began showing up at our planning meetings, and it was easier to involve them in conversations about cultural history. They began researching African American style and created online mood boards on Tumblr to document what they learned and what they liked. The mood boards referenced different aspects of Black style, from Josephine Baker's feather plumes to Angel Haze's dark psychedelia. Maasai beadwork and Ghanian *Adrinka* symbols popped up next to Solange in Ankara short-shorts.

Thanks to rap's current obsession with high fashion, many guys were willing to help out. They collaged pictures of their favorite emcees dressed to the nines: A$AP Rocky in leather Givenchy shorts and Pharrell sporting Lanvin tuxedos and the latest Bathing Ape gear.

Planning for the Show

In January 2014, our planning process shifted into high gear. Charlene ran tryouts for models and rehearsals began for the models. Our hostess and emcee, Ronya Traynham, organized guest artists and designed the décor. Boston-based designer Judith Bashala graciously offered to show her clothing and began coming to Providence on a monthly basis for fittings.

AS220 VISTA volunteer Janay Pina worked with youth to develop an African-inspired makeup look, while Nila Lares was sewing skirts and sundresses out of colorful geometric print fabrics. Kyle Collins created a line of hoodies for the show, and Fernando Flaquer got busy screen printing RIOT in Japanese on all his clothes.

One of the most rewarding and enjoyable partnerships to develop was with a group of teens from Central Falls, Rhode Island, called the Fashionistas. Led by teaching artist Rachel Stern with model coaches Sammy Medina and Sadio Sokona, the group designs and models clothing in an afterschool workshop. They also learn makeup techniques and the basics of fashion photography. When the Fashionistas learned about the Will to Adorn fashion show, they began choreographing a scene for the show. Rachel also brought the Will to Adorn Project to an alternative education classroom called the Square Mile Program. The ten young men in the program were given digital cameras and asked to shoot photos of Central Falls swag. The team assembled their footage into a short video that premiered at the show.

The Day Finally Arrives!

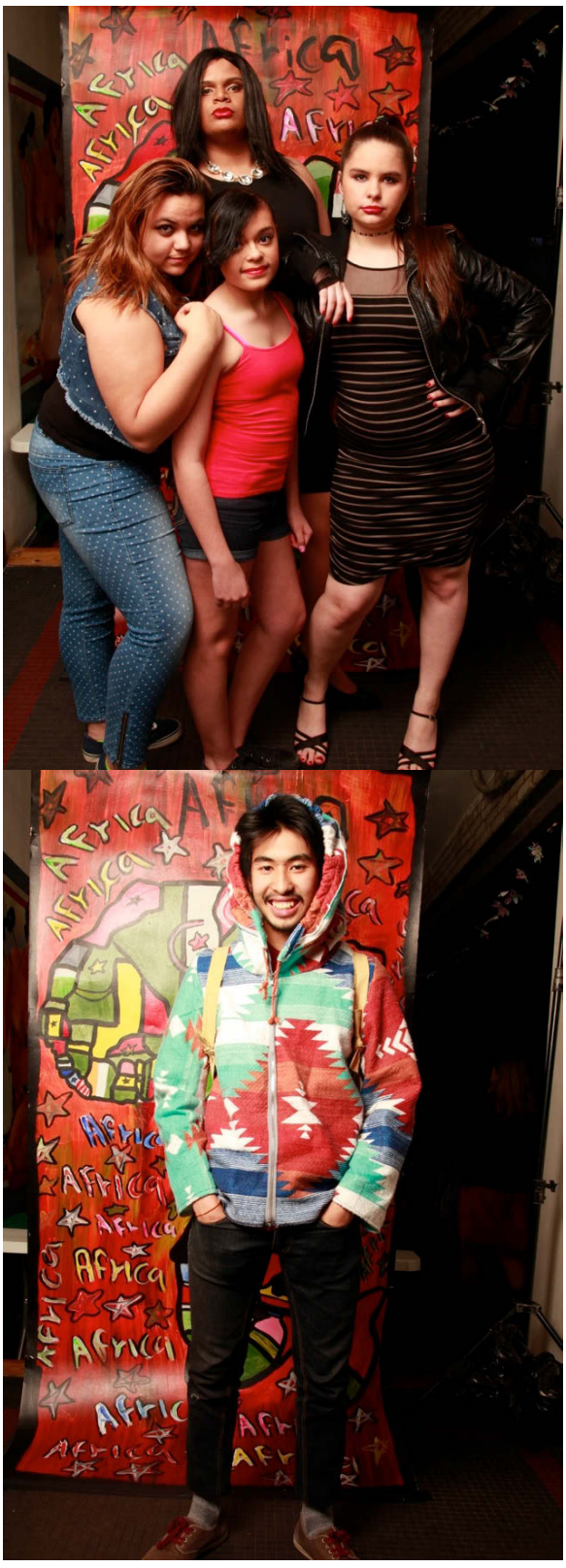
After months of preparation, the day of the show finally arrived. The date fell during the week of public school vacation, so young people were on AS220's doorstep at 10 am, ready to get busy. Some youth focused on getting the stage set up, while others organized the media files we needed to project. Our social butterflies took to the Internet, letting friends, followers, and family know that something special was about to happen. The show was slated to begin at 6, but by 5 pm, we already had a crowd. DJ Kris Fame hit the decks and played the latest hits from West Africa, while Nigerian chef Iyabo Odewole fed everyone jerk chicken with rice and peas. When that ran out, our friends from New Orleans' Ashé Cultural Center showed up with enormous pots of spicy gumbo.

AS220 Youth's Photo Program set up a photo booth, with a backdrop painted by Liberian artist Uriah Zoegar. Audience members, models, and guest artists lined up to get their portraits taken.

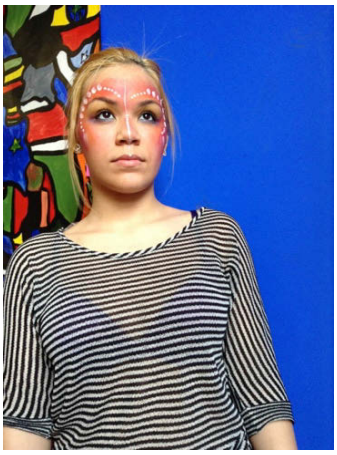
Our hosts, Ronya Traynham and Mike Johnson, got the night off to a great start with their charisma and humor. They explained the Will to Adorn Project and AS220 Youth's involvement. Then our models and guest artists took to the stage:

- Spoken word artist Christopher Johnson offered a sartorial autobiography
- Will to Adorn videos from AS220 Youth and Central Falls were shown
- Playwrights Yunus and Habibah Qudus performed a one-act play about how brand-name clothes DON'T make the man
- Youth designers Kyle and Fernando talked about their nascent streetwear line, Broken Monuments
- AS220's rap group, ZuKrewe, and dance troupes 2legit and Project 401 performed

And then there were the clothes. Models from AS220 and Central Falls took turns doing scenes with Judith Bashala's outfits, as well as Personal Style sections. By the time the models hit the stage, the cheers were deafening. The crowd was incredibly supportive and showed all the performers love, regardless of their looks or the cost of their clothes. Emcee Ronya said, *"I feel like it went wonderfully. Even during the months of*



Square Mile Street Style Video [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L3YnKVofAm0%5D]



Central Falls Fashionistas
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EcL-Lti0gy8

planning, I didn't imagine this many people would come. When you looked out from the stage, it was just a sea of faces."

ZuKrewe member Casimiro Pereira agreed. *"I walked out feeling so happy. I walked out ecstatic. There's so much negativity in our community, especially among young people from this neighborhood who's got problems with people from that neighborhood. This night just goes to show that we're all one community and can support one another."*

Lessons Learned

AS220 Youth is an art studio, and when youth come into our space, it's with the expectation that they're going to make something. Engaging youth in a more academic pursuit—like ethnographic research—was challenging. Success came when we made research a means to an end, with the end being a big party for the whole community. As soon as the lights went down at the end of the show, youth began asking when the next one was going to happen. If we do move forward with another fashion show, we plan to dedicate more time on the front end to folkloristic research. We'd love to bring Smithsonian curators and educators to AS220 to run workshops on sartorial traditions and "artisans of style."

Behind the Lens: Girls of Color in the Media at the Museum of the African Diaspora

by Indiia Wilmott

This community program puts African American adornment traditions at the heart of our media literacy program. Many of our lessons begin with an activity about a particular type of adornment and then we look critically at how that tradition is depicted in various media outlets. For example, we recently studied African American hair adornment and then took an in-depth look at the natural hair social media movement. Once the girls had a historical reference for their traditions, they were able to look at current trends with a more critical eye. I found that hair adornment is a great way to get girls to open up about how media can shape how we see ourselves.

Questions asked in our activities include: Who's in charge of the messaging? What exactly is the message being sent to young women of color? How does this messaging make them feel about their own identity? These important questions contribute to the success of our lessons, which we have learned must include these factors: celebrating women of color, analyzing the current media messaging surrounding women of color, and asking how such messages make the girls feel.

Our hope with Behind the Lens is that we inspire our girls not only to look at social media, reality television, magazines and other media with a critical eye, but also create or share content that they want to see and that they want others to see. They can start a Tumblr page, Pinterest board, or Facebook community with the purpose of sharing positive images and stories about women of color. In addition, we have given them the groundwork to help them speak up when they see something that looks or feels wrong because they understand the power behind dress, adornment, and media.

IDEA PORTAL

Exploring Culture and Identity through Folk Dance Costume

by Susan Eleuterio

Knowledge about folk dance costume in the United States exists within an odd juxtaposition. On the one hand, these costumes seem very familiar to many teachers, students, and families because of cultural heritage days at schools, multicultural festivals, and stage extravaganzas such as "River Dance." Yet, there exist few research studies or work that specifically acknowledges costumes or their explicit role in the culture and identity of those who design, make, and wear dance costumes.

For decades, historians, ethnographers, and folklorists, along with representatives of cultural groups themselves, have used folk dance costume as a symbol of identity, while neglecting to look past its beauty and sometime "exotic" appearance. An exception is Don Yoder, who wrote: "Folk costume is that form of dress which (1) outwardly symbolizes the identity of a folk community and (2) expresses the individuals' manifold relationship to and within the community" (1972:296). Examining the materials, designs, symbols, colors, patterns, along with the goals of the makers, and the beliefs of those who wear it, can provide a methodology for exploring history and folk culture.

In the Classroom

The first step in this exploration of folk dance costume is to examine symbols, design, colors, sewing techniques (such as embroidery), hairstyles, and accessories. What clues do these provide to cultural history and beliefs?

Next, students will want to dig even deeper into how the dancer feels, what the seamstress or tailor thinks, and how the costume fits into larger issues of representation. What would thoughts and feelings tell us about cultural identity?

How could you and your students learn more about the answers to these questions?

The two examples provided next are snapshots of two hyphenated American cultures: Irish and Mexican, which together make up nearly 30 percent of Americans.[1] In both dance traditions, there are solo dresses as well as company dresses (and for males, outfits). Studying these costumes reveals that every decade has its own unique history, and there are continuing changes in how costume is designed, who makes it, who wears it, and what accessories, hairstyles, and makeup accompany it. Thousands of young people all over the United States study Irish, Mexican, and other folk dance genres, so the study of costume may tap local knowledge and highlight students' traditions.

Irish American Step Dance

Photo courtesy Sandy Campbell

This dress, worn by Brigid Campbell (Comer) in 1997 as a member of the Trinity Irish Dance Company in Chicago, is a traditional Irish American step dance costume design based on the *brat* and *leine* style costume with Kells/Celtic embroidery (Robb 1998:9). This costume dates to the Gaelic revival in Ireland, when after years of British rule, the Irish began to bring back old traditions and patterns that had been banned such as the *Book of Kells*, an illuminated manuscript of the Christian gospels. In addition to the designs from the *Book of Kells*, certain colors such as saffron and green had been banned as well (Robb 1998:35).

Brigid's mother, Sandy Campbell, sent the dressmaker a photo of the stained glass windows (based on the *Book of Kells* and designed by Thomas O'Shaughnessy) from Old St. Patrick's Church in Chicago as inspiration and the colors of the dress reflect traditional Irish colors of green, blue, and white. The brat, which looks like a cape here, was a cloak, typically worn by peasants in the countryside. The leine was a tunic (like a dress) worn to the knees.

Brigid is also wearing a headpiece and her hair in curls, which became a tradition in Irish step dance costume in the 1960s in Ireland and the United States. Today, most Irish step dancers wear wigs rather than having to set their hair in curlers or use curling irons. Her black hard shoes, like a tap dancing shoe, are designed to make a sound like drum when she dances. In the old days, dancers would hammer nails into their shoes to add to the sound. These days, the shoes are made from fiberglass and imported from Ireland.

Mexican Folk Dance Jalisco Dress

Mexican Folkloric Dance Company of Chicago, photo courtesy of Pepe Ovalle

These dresses, worn by dancers with the Mexican Folkloric Dance Company of Chicago (MFDC), are based on clothing traditionally worn in the state of Jalisco, on Mexico's western coast. The design of the costume reflects the influence of the Spanish and other Europeans on Mexico's traditional culture, especially the lace and ruffles. Other than the crisscrossed braids, not much reflects the indigenous Native culture. Referred to by Mexican Americans as a "modern costume," the Jalisco costume "dates from the mid-1800s to about 1910, when the female dress (in Jalisco) took on early 20th-century European fashions, mainly French" (Ovalle 2002). The Jalisco style, including the hairstyle, demonstrates the *ranchero* (rural) origins of this dress. Dona Amparo Gonzalez de Ovalle, a professional seamstress and the mother of artistic director Jose Ovalle made these costumes. While some costumes are purchased in Mexico, she still sews many of the costumes for the company.

The Jalisco dress style, with its bright colors and mix of European and some indigenous elements, is used by a number of Mexican American Midwestern *ballet folklorico* companies. Dancers use the wide skirt and ruffles to emphasize the movements of the dance steps and courtship rituals between men and women. [2]

MFDC founder Henry Roa, wrote: "The Company strives to promote the Mexican culture through dance and music that reflects Mexican history" (1997:np). Ballet folklorico developed as Mexico was establishing its independence and a national identity separate from Spain. In the 1950s, Amalia Hernandez founded *Ballet Folklorico Mexico*, which has influenced troupes across the United States in both its staged presentations of dance as well as in focusing on a wide range of Mexico's regional

dances and costumes. Olga Najera-Ramirez has described the efforts of Hernandez and contemporary Mexican folklorico companies such as MFDC to interpret traditional culture as residing "in where they place their emphasis along the continuum of *public spectacle* at one extreme and *preservation* of expressive cultural forms at the other" (2009:286, italics in original). MFDC continues to conduct research and purchase clothing in Mexico in their quest to present traditional forms as well as using some costumes that have become symbolic of certain regions.[3]

Mexican Folkloric Dance Company of Chicago, photo courtesy of Pepe Ovalle

Susan Eleuterio *is a professional folklorist and educator. She holds an MA in American Folk Culture from the Cooperstown Graduate Program (SUNY/Oneonta) and a BA in English/Education from the University of Delaware. She has conducted fieldwork and developed public programs including exhibits, festivals, educational folk arts workshops and residencies--along with professional development programs for teachers and artists--with schools, museums, arts education agencies and arts organizations across the United States.*

Works Cited

Robb, Martha. 1998. *Irish Dancing Costume*, Dublin: Roberts Rinehart.

Najera-Ramirez, Olga. 2009. "Staging Authenticity". In *Dancing Across Borders:* Danzas y Bailes Mexicanos, 277-292. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

Ovalle, Jose Luis. 2002. *20th Anniversary Booklet, Mexican Folkloric Dance Company of Chicago.*

Roa. Hank. 1997. *15th Anniversary Booklet, Mexican Folkloric Dance Company of Chicago*.

Don Yoder. 1972. "Folk Costume." *Folklore and Folklife*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Endnotes

[1]In 2013, 11percent of Americans reported Mexican ancestry and nearly 19 percent of Americans reported Irish ancestry in 2008. "Irish American" http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Irish_American. "Mexican American" http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mexican_American.

[2] Various interviews with Hank Roa and Jose Ovalle over past ten years.

[3] Ibid.

Marks of Distinction in an Afro-Brazilian Martial Art

by Lauren Miller Griffith

A typical weekly performance event of the FICA group in *Salvador da Bahia*, *Brasil*.

If facing an armed adversary in a dark alley, there are many things you might want at your disposal…but a silk scarf probably wouldn't be at the top of that list. Yet for *capoeiristas* at the turn of the 20th century, silk scarves were an important part of their ensemble. The silk was believed to protect the wearer's neck from the straight razors that were a common weapon at the time. However, the meaning of an item of clothing may change over time, mirroring changes in the society in which the martial art is practiced.

Capoeira is an Afro-Brazilian martial art that combines music, dance, and sparring to music performed by a live orchestra. Although its exact origins are unlikely ever to be discovered, capoeira most likely developed as West African slaves and, later, free blacks intermingled on Brazilian colonial plantations and in cities. Because capoeira gangs, often armed with straight razors, were a public nuisance in the late 1800s, capoeira was eventually outlawed. After decades of seeking legitimacy, formal capoeira academies were opened in the first half of the 1900s.

After becoming legalized, capoeira developed into two different forms, each of which can be distinguished both by the style of play as well as the sartorial choices made by its founder. *Capoeira Regional* is typically played wearing a white uniform, bare feet, and a colored belt. When Mestre Bimba was developing the Capoeira Regional style in the 1920s and 1930s, he initially awarded students colored neck scarves to mark their advancement. He also codified the form and imposed a strict behavioral code on students. Within this context, silk scarves were no longer needed to protect capoeiristas from straight razors; however, they had become valuable markers of a student's level of achievement. The scarves have now been exchanged for colored belts that distinguish novices from more advanced students.

Dress often reflects a group's ideology and the differences between Capoeira Regional and *Capoeira Angola* are instructive in this regard. Capoeira Angola is explicitly nonhierarchical in how groups are organized and there are no visible markers of students' status. For training, most players wear black pants and a T-shirt, often with the group's logo on it. However, there are times when *angoleiros* wear special clothes. On some occasions, such as a public performance or special session in honor of a master's birthday or a holiday, players might wear all white. This has been explained to me in various ways. Some people say it symbolizes the white suits that men used to wear to church. It was a mark of a capoeirista's skill if he could play capoeira in his suit, avoid falling or getting dirty, and show up at church with no one the wiser about what he had done beforehand.

Others root the tradition of wearing white even further back in history, claiming that it dates to the era of slavery when slaves had to make their clothing out of flour sacks. Wearing white is a way of creating a symbolic link with those who are credited with inventing and preserving the art.

Questions for Further Study

What martial art uniforms are familiar to you? Describe one.

How do martial art uniforms reflect the values of the societies in which they are practiced?

How do uniforms reflect the beliefs of a martial art tradition?

What other uniforms for sport or work include symbols or colors that have cultural meaning for the wearer?

This image shows the typical day-to-day training uniforms of the *Estrela do Norte* group, pictured here at a workshop in Oberlin, Ohio. The author is in the front row, far right. Mestre Joao Grande is back center with the white cap, and Mestre Iuri Santos is on his left.

Lauren Miller Griffith, *PhD, is an Assistant Professor of Anthropology at Hanover College. She studies performance, tourism, and education in Latin America. Currently, she is interested in how indigenous groups in Belize are engaging with the tourism industry and working to maintain power over their own representations in the tourist imaginary.*

Resource List

Assunção, Matthias Röhrig. 2005. *Capoeira: A History of an Afro-Brazilian Martial Art (Sport in the Global Society)*. New York: Routledge.

Capoeira, Nestor. 1995. *The Little Capoeira Book*. Berkeley: North Atlantic Books.

Downey, Greg. 2005. *Learning Capoeira: Lessons in Cunning from an Afro-Brazilian Art*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Talmon-Chvaicer, Maya. 2008. *The Hidden History of Capoeira: A Collision of Cultures in the Brazilian Battle Dance*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Classroom Application: The Art of Dress in the Martial Arts

Whether a black belt in karate, a fencing champion, or a capoeira master, people who practice martial arts have worn distinctive clothing for hundreds of years. Distinctive clothing marks one as a practitioner to the broader world and within the world of that sport identifies levels of expertise. Many young people today practice a wide variety of martial arts, which provides another lens for investigating dress, practicing inquiry skills, and learning to interview and summarize findings.

The *Estrela do Norte* capoeira group from Bloomington, Indiana performs in Indianapolis.
Photo courtesy of Linda Lewis

Prepare students for researching martial arts clothing by telling them that the martial arts have ancient histories in Europe, Asia, and Africa. Some are associated with combat, some with health or spiritual development, and some with all these elements. Examples include karate, tai chi, fencing, boxing, wrestling, archery, and capoeira. Read "Marks of Distinction in an Afro-Brazilian Martial Art" as an introduction to researching martial arts clothing. Depending upon your students, assign them to read it as well or summarize and discuss the article in class.

To find practitioners to interview, begin by asking students if they take a form of martial arts. Who has a friend or family member who practices a martial art? After identifying people to interview in teams or individually, students should research the interviewee's art form and prepare questions and our interview Release Form[1]. The worksheet offers a variety of questions to launch student research into local martial arts practices. Not all questions will pertain to each interview. During interviews, students should take notes and sketch or photograph the martial arts clothing. If working in teams, they may divide tasks: interviewing, note taking, sketch artist, photographer, audio or video recorder.

In a class discussion of students' research, ask students to share sketches or photographs as well as to summarize their findings. It can be just as interesting to discuss some questions that the interviewees were unable to answer as the ones that they do answer. For example, they could talk about why gender differences might be downplayed in martial arts whereas in folk dance, for example, there are distinct differences in dress and roles.

Footnote:
1. Find our Release Form here: http://locallearningnetwork.org/local-learning-tools

Classroom Application: The Art of Dress in the Martial Arts

This series of questions will help in planning an interview with someone who practices a martial art about the sport's special clothing. Be sure to sketch or photograph the uniform.

Interviewer _____

Interviewee _____

Date _____ Place of Interview _____

___Yes, the Interviewee completed a release form giving permission to share this interview.

What form of martial arts do you practice?

Where and how often do you practice?

What do you wear for this sport?

How many pieces does the uniform include?

What do you wear on your head?

What do you wear on your hands?

What do you wear on your feet?

Do you use any equipment besides your clothing? If so, what?

How many colors are in the uniform? Which are most important? What do the colors symbolize, if anything?

Are there differences in the clothing for boys and girls? If so, what are they?

Where did you get your uniform?

Who taught you how to wear it?

Where do you keep it?

Do you wear it anywhere other than the training academy? Why or why not?

Does it need special care or cleaning?

What do you like best about the uniform?

The *Guayabera* and Cultural Research

by Paddy Bowman

We take our clothing for granted. Pull on a T-shirt, zip up your jeans, slip into some flip-flops, and head out the door. But clothing has a history and often serves as a cultural marker. When folklorist Michael Knoll moved to Miami, Florida, he noticed that many men there wore distinctive shirts called *guayaberas*, a garment commonly worn throughout much of Latin America and the Caribbean. As a newcomer to South Florida and a folklorist, he decided to learn about the guayabera as a way to understand his new community.

After finding few academic publications on this topic, Michael used the tools of the folklorist's trade to learn more. He checked the Yellow Pages, did online research, and drove around neighborhoods to find businesses that made and sold guayaberas. He began speaking to people to learn their ways of thinking about the shirt. Michael came across stories that placed the creation of the guayabera in Cuba, Mexico, and other countries. He also learned how important the shirt is to Cuban Americans in Miami and men of many ethnicities who wear guayaberas to weddings, religious events, family cookouts, and work.

During this initial research, Michael found little trustworthy historical information, so he decided to create a research project. He said, "I thought that combining historical research with a folklorist's approach could bring the story of this iconic shirt into the present." He traveled to Cuba and Mexico to investigate the story in archives and conduct interviews in factories, tailoring shops, and elsewhere. Michael compiled his research by curating *The Guayabera: A Shirt's Story*, an exhibition at HistoryMiami.

So, where did the guayabera originate? Learn more about Michael's discoveries and the guayabera in the bilingual website www.historymiami.org/guayabera, developed as an online version of the exhibition. "History is constructed," said Michael. "We invite others to build on our starting point."

Photographs courtesy of HistoryMiami

Classroom Connection

The tuxedo, jeans, mini-skirts, dashikis—what item of clothing fascinates you? Choose one to investigate and deepen your historical research with interviews to include people's experiences and viewpoints. Use our Release Form and create a web page, slideshow, podcast, or report to share what you learn.

Overheard: Dress Sayings and Proverbs

Coded into our everyday speech, sartorial expressions abound. In his study of Rastafarian proverbs, Sw. Anand Prahlad outlines four levels of meaning embedded within this speech act: 1) the *grammatical* or literal meaning; 2) the *social* meaning, where meaning is understood within a group context; 3) the *situational* meaning, which depends on how the proverb is used rhetorically; and 4) the *symbolic* meaning, or meanings, which emerge from each individual speaker or listener's experience (2001:2). How might students analyze their own common phrases that include dress-related expressions? By giving them a couple of examples from below, what other phrases may they discover? How do they use these sayings? What meanings do such sayings have to them?

Dress slowly, we're in a hurry.
Let a smile be your umbrella.
A stitch in time saves nine.
That's a feather in your cap.
The emperor wore no clothes.
Don't air your dirty linen in public.
All dressed up and nowhere to go.
It was as comfortable as an old shoe.
Wear your best bib and tucker.
Buckle down and work hard.
It was a cloak-and-dagger operation.
Those two are cut from the same cloth.
They were dressed to kill.
I'll eat my hat.
She would give you the shirt off her back.
He got the boot.
Handle him with kid gloves.
She might have a card up her sleeve.
Try to walk in another's shoes.
Keep your shirt on.
We did it on a shoestring.
Pass the hat.
Pull up your bootstraps.

Works Cited

Prahlad, Sw. Anand. 2001. *Reggae Wisdom: Proverbs in Jamaican Music.* Jackson: University of Mississippi Press.

The *Journal of Folklore and Education* is a publication of
Local Learning: The National Network for Folk Arts in Education

Local Learning: The National Network for Folk Arts in Education prepares students of all ages, their teachers, and their families to draw on traditional culture and local knowledge to enrich education and communities.

SUBSCRIBE Sign up for the quarterly Local Learning E-Bulletin for news, resources, model projects, job announcements, and updates.

FACEBOOK "Like us" on Facebook to stay connected.

The 2015 theme for the *Journal of Folklore and Education* is Youth in Community.
The focus will be on bringing youth voices and visions to the forefront to serve as catalysts in diverse places. It considers "student-driven" pedagogy to be not only an adjective, but also an action verb that encompasses research methods, critical thinking, and production. We welcome ideas for submissions of articles, model projects, multimedia products, classroom applications, and student work.

About the Editors

Paddy Bowman *is Director of Local Learning and creator of numerous folklore and education resources.She is co-editor of* Th rough the Schoolhouse Door: Folklore, Community, Curriculum *and received the 2013 Benjamin A. Botkin Prize for Lifetime Achievement in Public Folklore from the American Folklore Society. Reach her at pbbowman@gmail.com*.

Lisa Rathje *is Assistant Director of Local Learning and Director of Folklife Programs with Company of Folk in Chicago, Illinois, and consults nationally specializing in education initiatives, cultural documentation, public programming, nonprofit planning, and applying cultural knowledge in social justice efforts. She also teaches in the Goucher College* Masters in Cultural Sustainability *program. Reach her at rathje.lisa@gmail.com*.