

Call for Papers
EFHA International Conference 2026

23-24 November 2026, the Central Museum of Textiles, Łódź

In Situ / On Site

Industrial Heritage and the Geographies of Fashion Production

The study of fashion heritage has been shaped predominantly by an object-centred paradigm. Textiles, garments, accessories and their associated archival materials have served as the primary vehicles through which scholars, curators and heritage professionals have constructed narratives of fashion's past. This approach has yielded rich insights into design, craftsmanship, material culture and the biographies of individual objects.

The EFHA International Conference 2026, *In Situ / On Site: Industrial Heritage and the Geographies of Fashion Production*, proposes a deliberate shift in perspective. Drawing on the conceptual frameworks of industrial archaeology, critical heritage studies and urban geography, the conference invites participants to redirect attention from the object to the site: the factories, workshops, districts, warehouses and landscapes where fashion and textile production has historically taken place, and where the material traces of that production continue to shape contemporary cultural, economic and urban realities.

Industrial archaeology has long advocated for the systematic study of material evidence associated with the industrial past. In 2003, *The Nizhny Tagil Charter for the Industrial Heritage* established the international benchmark for defining and protecting such heritage, recognising both tangible remains and the intangible knowledge attached to them. Fashion studies, however, have been comparatively slow to adopt this spatial orientation. While the broader heritage field has developed robust frameworks for interpreting post-industrial landscapes, the specific intersections between fashion production, industrial geography and the politics of preservation remain underexplored.

This conference takes up that challenge. The concept of the *site* is understood here not merely as a physical location but as a contested terrain where questions of memory, identity, labour and urban transformation converge. From the silk-weaving workshops of Spitalfields and Lyon to the former textile districts in Germany, Italy, Poland, Switzerland and elsewhere, from the lace and embroidery centres in different European countries to the many garment factories, fashion's material culture has been shaped by specific geographies of production. Many of these sites have since undergone radical transformation: converted into museums, archives, schools or brand headquarters, or else abandoned and demolished. This post-industrial landscape has consequently created new geographies of production that force us to rethink both a nationalist discourse on heritage and new industrial landscapes for future fashion heritage.

This conference proposes that these processes of transformation are not ancillary to fashion heritage but central to it. It also aims to highlight an innovative approach to the concept of European fashion, drawing on elements related to regional characteristics and seeking common ground that complements more traditionally practiced interpretive frameworks.

We welcome proposals that engage with, but are not limited to, the following thematic areas. Submissions may address these themes from historical, theoretical, curatorial, practice-based or comparative perspectives, and are encouraged to draw on case studies from any geographical context.

Textile Districts and Industrial Geographies

- *Localisation, specialisation and the formation of industrial ecologies in fashion production*
- *Regional histories and local narratives of fashion production*

Industrial Heritage and Fashion: From Object to Place

- *The practice and discourse of industrial archaeology and its application to fashion and textile heritage*
- *Material and immaterial dimensions of industrial sites: buildings, urban spaces and preservation processes*
- *Craft versus industry? Redefining industrial craft against marketing lingo*

Requalification, Regeneration and the Repurposing of Industrial Spaces

- *Post-industrial spaces as sites for archives, collections and cultural discourse*
- *The recontextualisation of industrial spaces: factories becoming museums, schools or residences*
- *Invention of tradition: how techniques are updated, reimagined or displaced in regenerated sites*
- *Urban transformation and the politics of industrial preservation*

Museum Evolution: From Textile Collections to Fashion Heritage

- *Recurring patterns of institutional evolution from textile to fashion collections*
- *Fabric sample books, industrial collections and their research potential*

Liminal Spaces: Fairs, Exhibitions and the Display of Industrial Production

- *The history of great exhibitions and their connection to fashion and textile industries*
- *Trade fairs and presentations as sites of heritage construction*
- *Exhibition-making as a mode of industrial communication*

Global Production, Displacement and New Heritage

- *Displacement of production: from European districts to global manufacturing centres*
- *New and future heritage: luxury production, craft knowledge and emerging industrial sites*
- *Rethinking the rhetoric of "copying": complex heritage relationships*
- *Industry perspectives: voices from production managers, brand associations and industrial partners*

Private Heritage, Corporate Archives and Industry Engagement

- *Private heritage and the histories of family-oriented fashion businesses*
- *Industrial associations as custodians of heritage*

The proposals should be sent to info@fashionheritage.eu in the form of one Word document including a **max 300-word abstract** and **150-word biography**. The file should be renamed as **surname-firstname-EFHA26**. The deadline for the Call for Papers is **September 4 2026**, and accepted speakers will be notified by **September 21**.

The conference will take place on **23-24 November 2026** at the **Central Museum of Textiles (Centralne Muzeum Włókiennictwa)** in **Łódź**. Tickets will be available for booking from **September 2026**