Textile Collection Resources for Designers

Textile and fashion designers find their inspiration in many ways, including contemporary artists, traditional design works, and even folklore. Today, many institutions have digitized their collections—putting that spark of inspiration only a click away!

More info...

Selecting a Textile Testing Lab: Certification

This series addresses some of the important factors to consider in selecting a textile testing lab. Look for more articles in the “Selecting a Textile Lab” series Lab Affiliation, Proficiency, Specialized Services, Calibration, Test Method Development, Continuing Education and Customer Service.

More info...

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Congrats to our AATCC Graduates. Don't forget to email AATCC your new mailing address and receive the AATCC Grad Gift!
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UPCOMING EVENTS

June 2-3, 2015
NC FATR Review
Raleigh, NC
more info...

June 5, 2015
Hudson Mohawk Golf Outing
Little Falls, NY
more info...

June 10-14, 2015
The 13th International Wool Research Conference & AATCC Sustainability Symposium
Zhejiang Sci-Tech University
Hangzhou, Zhejiang, China
more info..

August 5-6, 2015
NC Aerospace Supplier and Advanced Manufacturing (ASAM) Summit
Charlotte, NC
more info..

September 16-17, 2015
Antibacterial/Odor Conference
Research Triangle Park, NC
more info..

October 29, 2015
New England Fall Meeting
Plainville, MA
more info..

**If you would like to register for an event please contact our Education Department.**

Open Enrollment
Textile Fundamentals Web-Based Training
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Online AATCC Test Method Training
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AATCC Recorded Webinars
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Getting White Right
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For complete list and updates, visit the AATCC Events page

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Textile Collection Resources for Designers

By Rachel Snack, Textile and Costume Collection Graduate Assistant, The Design Center at Philadelphia University

It’s important for makers and designers to understand the history of craft in order to inform the future of textile design. Many successful textile and fashion collections are born from the inspiration of tradition and antiquity. Inspiration can be drawn from contemporary artists such as Ethel Stein, traditional design works like the Unicorn Tapestries, and a blend of modern and folklore seen in the breathtaking Gee’s Bend Quilts.

Collecting research can be done in a multitude of ways, and many institutions have digitized their collections, making remote study possible. You can browse Philadelphia University’s The Design Center’s collection of textile swatches in their Tapestry Archive. The Powerhouse Museum has created an Electronic Swatchbook with over 1,500 textile samples. The Vogue Archive is a paid subscription that gives users access to over 400,000 color images of textiles and fashion. The Berg Fashion Library, Europeana Fashion, and The Vintage Fashion Guild also have online fashion and textile collections. Researching online enables a designer to narrow their focus, making their in-person visits to collections more efficient and purposeful.

Textile Swatch from The Design Center’s Textile and Costume Collection, made in Japan in 1956.

After using the digital databases, a trip to the institution of interest provides a more personal and tactile experience. Museums and University collections often display textile and costume exhibitions, and offer private viewings of their special collections for research purposes.

To highlight a few of these collections, The Design Center at Philadelphia University houses an extensive textile and costume collection. This collection can be toured and appointments can be made to use the collection for targeted research. The Textile Museum at George Washington University has an incredible resource library and textile collection. Drexel University’s collection can be seen in person or through their digitalized archives.

Other Universities and Museums include The Museum at FIT, The Costume and Textiles Study Room at Philadelphia Museum of Art,
The Historic Costume and Textiles Collection at Ohio State University, The Missouri Historic Costume and Textile Collection at The University of Missouri, and The Clothing and Textile Collections at Michigan State University.

Batik-printed Silk from The Vintage Fashion Guild, made in India.


Opportunities to use and enjoy these textile and costume collections are a special privilege of being a designer. The endless amounts of inspiration and invaluable knowledge available will equip any maker to create innovative and contemporary designs.

To make an appointment in the Textile and Costume Collection at Philadelphia University please contact curator Marcella Milio Martin at thedesigncenter@philau.edu or 215-951-2860. You can also find us on the web at philau.edu/library/textileandcostume.
Selecting a Textile Testing Lab, Part VIII

Certification

Over the past several months, this series of articles has addressed some of the important considerations in selecting a textile testing lab. These have included Lab Affiliation, Proficiency, Specialized Services, Calibration, Test Method Development, Continuing Education, and Customer Service. In some cases, certification can cover several of these issues with a single certificate, plaque, or stamp of approval. But, be careful; no certification can guarantee your satisfaction.

Customer Certification

Many labs have a wall full of certifications from their various customers. Qualifications may range from signing a contract to a thorough lab audit. Lots of certificates may be a good sign, but can also warrant a little research. If your company issues such a certificate, or if you are familiar with the qualifications required by another organization, look for those certificates first. If you’re not familiar with any particular customer certification process, it may be difficult to find out the details—there’s a reason why each company develops their own. You can, however, make some good guesses based on the available information. Look for certificates from companies with similar products or similar quality expectations as your own. Also, look for authentic signatures and current dates. You can always create a new certification program, but be prepared for the time and effort it will require from all the parties involved.

CPSC-Accepted

For testing of children’s products under the Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act (CPSIA), you will probably need to use a CPSC-accepted third party test lab. Remember that a particular lab may be accepted for some testing, but not for other testing. There are a number of resources on the US Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) website to help you find a lab accredited for the specific regulation you need to meet.

ISO Accredited

Many labs maintain ISO/IEC 17025 accreditation. While some of the requirements are similar to those of the ISO 9000 series for quality management, ISO/IEC 17025 is specific to testing and calibration labs. The full title of the standard is “General requirements for the competence of testing and calibration laboratories.” It includes both management requirements, such as record keeping, and technical requirements for accurate testing. While a lab may not be accredited for every test it performs, the general implementation of approved management practices may provide some confidence in the results of tests not officially within the scope of the accreditation.

It is also possible for a lab to be accredited to ISO 9001, Quality management systems – Requirements. This standard covers general management practices, but NOT specific testing requirements.

Other Certifications

Certifications, accreditations, and endorsements are available for everything from safety, environmental stewardship, and social responsibility to timeliness, customer service, and conformity. Determine what is most important to your organizations, find out what certifications apply, and look for a lab that has them. Other certifications are nice, but they can be expensive and time consuming, so let your lab know which ones have value for your business.
Conclusion

Choosing a testing lab can be a complex process. Sometimes it’s as simple as finding the quickest or cheapest way to get a test result, but for a long term relationship, it is probably worth considering some additional variables. Certification is one of these variables. Others were covered in the previous installments of this series. The relative importance of each variable will vary for each company, or even for specific sets of circumstances. The purpose of this series is not to rank the importance of factors or to promote a particular type of lab, but to inform potential lab customers of some of the choices available and some of the questions to consider in making a decision.