

17th-century Dress, Textiles and Portraiture at Gawthorpe Hall

Tuesday 14 May 2024, 11.20–16.15

A day of specialist presentations and tours exploring the interconnections between dress, textiles and portraiture during the 17th century, organised by the Understanding British Portraits Network (UBP) and the Textiles and Dress Specialists (DATS). Aimed at museum professionals, researchers and academics, the study day will investigate some highlights from the Rachel Kay-Shuttleworth textiles collection and the portrait collection at Gawthorpe Hall, which includes a large number of loans from the National Portrait Gallery.

Gawthorpe Hall, a beautiful mansion surrounded by landscaped gardens and woodland, was built for the Shuttleworth family in 1600-05, and retains Elizabethan panelling and plasterwork of outstanding quality. It was sensitively restored in the 1850s by Sir Charles Barry in collaboration with A.W.N. Pugin and was the only country house in which these two great architects of the Palace of Westminster collaborated. As a result, the collection is rich in Gothic Revival furniture and metalwork. Situated just outside Burnley in Lancashire, the Hall is today owned by the National Trust and managed by Lancashire County Council.

The Gawthorpe Textiles Collection, widely recognised as one of the finest collection of textiles in the UK, was built by Rachel Kay-Shuttleworth (1886-1967) in the first half of the 1960s for the study and practice of textiles and embroidery, based upon her own remarkable collections. Previously based at Gawthorpe Hall for over half a century, the collections have recently been carefully relocated to Northlight in Brierfield, a site which provides the space and flexibility to store and continue to grow the collection, as well as providing a modern, fit-for-purpose workshop space to increase public access and engagement.

Programme

- 10.45 Delegates to meet at Preston Station and travel by coach to the Gawthorpe Textiles Collection at Northlight, Brierfield. (Delegates wishing to arrive independently are welcome to do so)
- 11.20 Arrival and welcome
- 11.30 Introduction to the Gawthorpe Textiles Collection including handling session; and talks from Jill Burke, Professor of Renaissance Visual and Material Cultures at the University of Edinburgh and Professor Jenny Tiramani, Principal at the School of Historical Dress
- 13.45 Lunch (provided)
- 14.30 Transfer by coach to Gawthorpe Hall
- 14.45 Introduction to the portrait collection with Catharine MacLeod, Curator of Seventeenth-century Portraits at the National Portrait Gallery, and Gawthorpe Hall staff
- 15.30 Time to explore Gawthorpe Hall
- 16.15 Delegates to travel back to Preston via coach