Threads of Knowledge (New York, 5 Dec 26)

Barnard College, Columbia University, New York, Dec 05, 2026

Greg Bryda

Threads of Knowledge.
The Life of Textiles in the Middle Ages and Renaissance.

The 29th Biennial Conference of Barnard College's Medieval and Renaissance Studies Program will explore the role of textiles in medieval and early modern culture from a broad interdisciplinary and global perspective.

A conference featuring plenaries by

Sharon Farmer (UC-Santa Barbara) and Timothy McCall (Villanova)

Saturday, December 5, 2026
9:00 AM – 5:30 PM
Barnard Campus

Pre-registration required on Eventbrite: https://www.eventbrite.com/e/threads-of-knowledge-tickets-2001889470295
For inquiries and further questions, please contact Greg Bryda at gcb2128@columbia.edu.

Preliminary Schedule
8:00–9:00 a.m. Registration and Coffee
9:00–10:00 a.m. Plenary I
- Timothy McCall (Villanova), "The Material Culture and Social Lives of Renaissance Banners"

10:15–11:45 a.m. Parallel Sessions
Session A - Textile Epistemologies: Weaving, Reading, Knowing
- Kathryn Starkey (Stanford), "Materializing Courtliness: Textiles and Natural Order in Wernher der Gartenaere's Helmbrecht"
- Hannah Weaver (Columbia), "Weaving Narrative at the Champagne Fairs"
- Marcos Polisena (Rennes 2), "Reweaving Philosophia: Garment, Image, and the Medieval Transmission of Boethian Knowledge" [Speaker joining via Zoom]

Session B - Gender, Textiles, and Social Power
- Elizabeth Cleland (Metropolitan Museum), "Trastámara Women and Their Meditations in a Shared Tapestry Imaginary"
- Meagan Khoury (University of Wisconsin-Madison), "Arachne 'the Modern Gentlewoman': Ovid's Spiderwoman in Sixteenth-Century Italy"

- Taryn DeLeon Mendiola (Boston College), “Weaving Women, Measuring Men: Production and Control in the Medieval Icelandic Cloth Industry”

12:00 p.m.–1:00 p.m. Lunch Break
1:00–2:00 p.m. Plenary II
- Sharon Farmer (University of Caliornia-Santa Barbara), “Violence, Global Trade and Luxury Consumption: What Count Robert of Artois Wore at the Battle of the Golden Spurs”

2:15–3:45 p.m. Parallel Sessions
Session C - Medieval Textile Exchange
- Kathryn Blair Moore (University of Connecticut), “The Tent of Kerbogha between Syria and Italy: Ur-Object or Textual Fabrication?”
- Eiren L. Shea (Grinnell), “Mongol Dress in the South Caucuses (13th–14th Centuries)”
- Ittai Weinryb (Bard Graduate Center), “Down to the Wire”

Session D - Reading Textiles for Material Evidence and Identity
- Alice Isabella Sullivan (Tufts), “Tomb Textiles: Craft, Ritual, and Identity in a Post-Byzantine Embroidered Funerary Portrait”
- Tetiana Krupa (Margulan Pavlodar, Kazakhstan), “Conservation as Reading: Archaeological Textile Fragments and the Hermeneutics of Textus” [Speaker joining via Zoom]
- Sumru Belger Krody (GWU Museum and The Textile Museum), “Shaping of Identities: Early Medieval Egyptian Garments”

4:00–5:30 p.m. Parallel Sessions
Session E - Making and Labor
- Claire Dillon (Columbia), “Weaving and Writing Narratives: Silk, Identity, and Historiographies of Making in Medieval Sicily”
- Nuray Ocakli (Istanbul Sabahattin), “Early History of Silk Industry in the Ottoman Capital: A Case Study of Romaniote Jewish Craftsmen and Silk Workers in Istanbul (1455–1597)” [Speaker joining via Zoom]
- Elizabeth Hebbard (Indiana), “New Perspectives on the Bayeux Tapestry through Natural Resources, Time Cycles, and Labor”

Session F - Early Modern Textiles: Ritual, Status, Diplomacy
- Cristina Balloffet Carr (Metropolitan Museum), “A Bearinge Clothe for the Christeninge: An Interdisciplinary Investigation of Contexts, Materiality and Values in Early Modern England”, a collaboration with Mary M. Brooks (Durham) and Patricia Wilson Nguyen (Independent Researcher)
- Mar Morosse (Baruch), “Dressing Empire in Black: Sumptuary Law, Social Hierarchy, and Imperial Identity in Habsburg Spain”
- Nazanin Hedayat Munroe (City University of New York), “Persian Silks in Diplomatic Exchange with Early Modern Europe”

Session G - Seeing Textiles
- Luming Guan (Cambridge), “Knots in Renaissance Scientific Culture: Ornament, Knowledge, and Print from Ratdolt to Leonardo”
- Millie Horton-Insch (British Museum), “Textiles within the Bayeux Tapestry”
- Jane Malcolm-Davies (Uppsala), “The material eye: Cultivating interdisciplinary material literacy

for early modern textile research”

5:30–6:30 p.m. Reception

Reference:
CONF: Threads of Knowledge (New York, 5 Dec 26). In: ArtHist.net, Oct 7, 2026 (accessed Nov 9, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/54547>.