



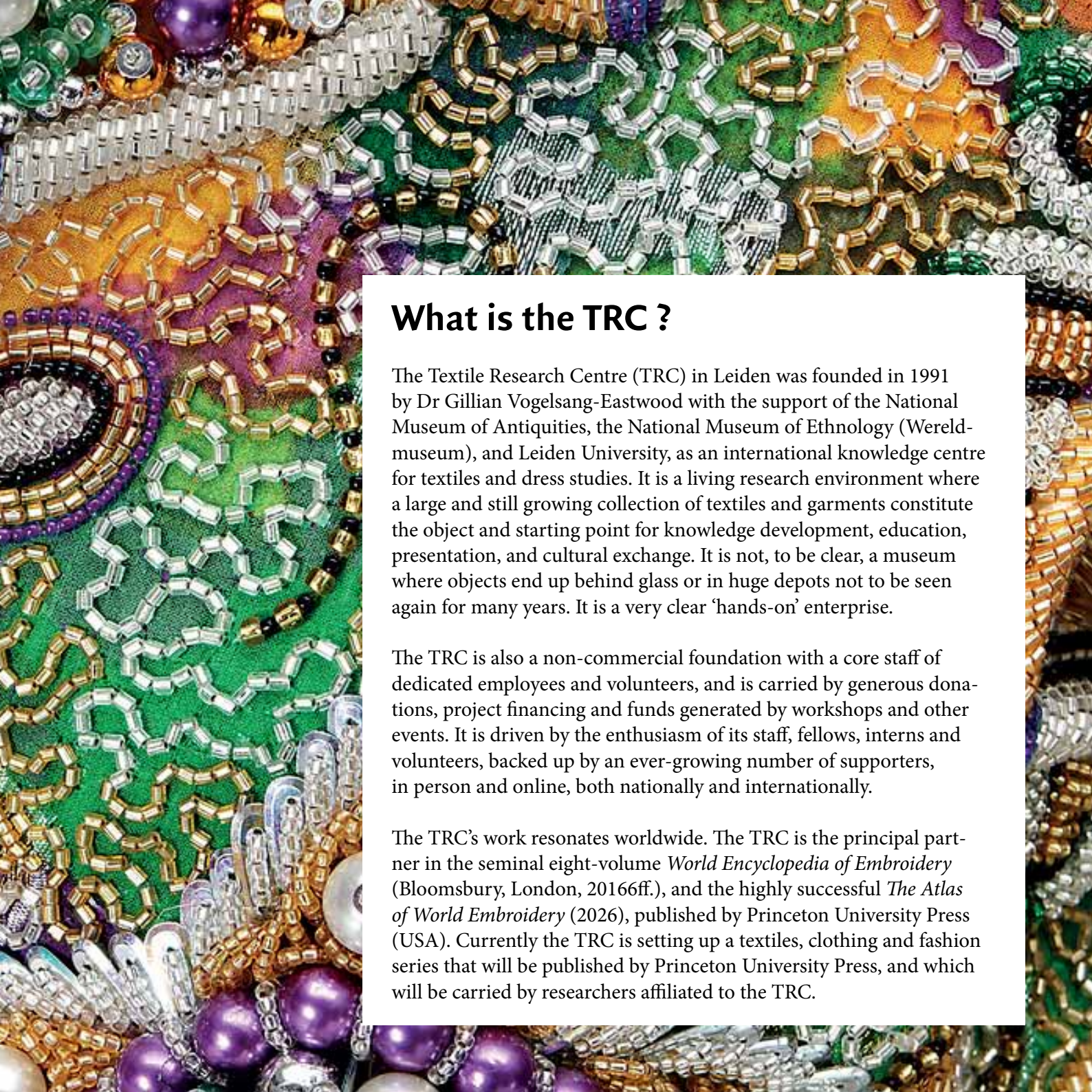
Textile Research Centre Leiden



Why textiles and dress ?

Textiles and dress are some of the oldest and most versatile carriers of culture in human history. In every society—regardless of time, place and tradition—they are linked with daily life, as well as with the rituals and social relationships that mark human existence. Materials, patterns, techniques, and garments carry traces of aesthetic traditions, identity, knowledge, migration, politics, religion, social structures, and trade. Textiles and dress tell us who we are, who we want to be and how we want to be regarded, where we come from, and how communities and individuals relate to one another.

The preservation and use of textile and dress heritage, and the study of new developments, are therefore of great cultural and social importance. They offer insight into local and global history, now and in the past, form a source of sustainable innovation, inspire contemporary makers and designers, feed discussions around heritage and identity, and create space for communities to recognise their own traditions and stories and pass them on to future generations.



What is the TRC ?

The Textile Research Centre (TRC) in Leiden was founded in 1991 by Dr Gillian Vogelsang-Eastwood with the support of the National Museum of Antiquities, the National Museum of Ethnology (Wereldmuseum), and Leiden University, as an international knowledge centre for textiles and dress studies. It is a living research environment where a large and still growing collection of textiles and garments constitute the object and starting point for knowledge development, education, presentation, and cultural exchange. It is not, to be clear, a museum where objects end up behind glass or in huge depots not to be seen again for many years. It is a very clear 'hands-on' enterprise.

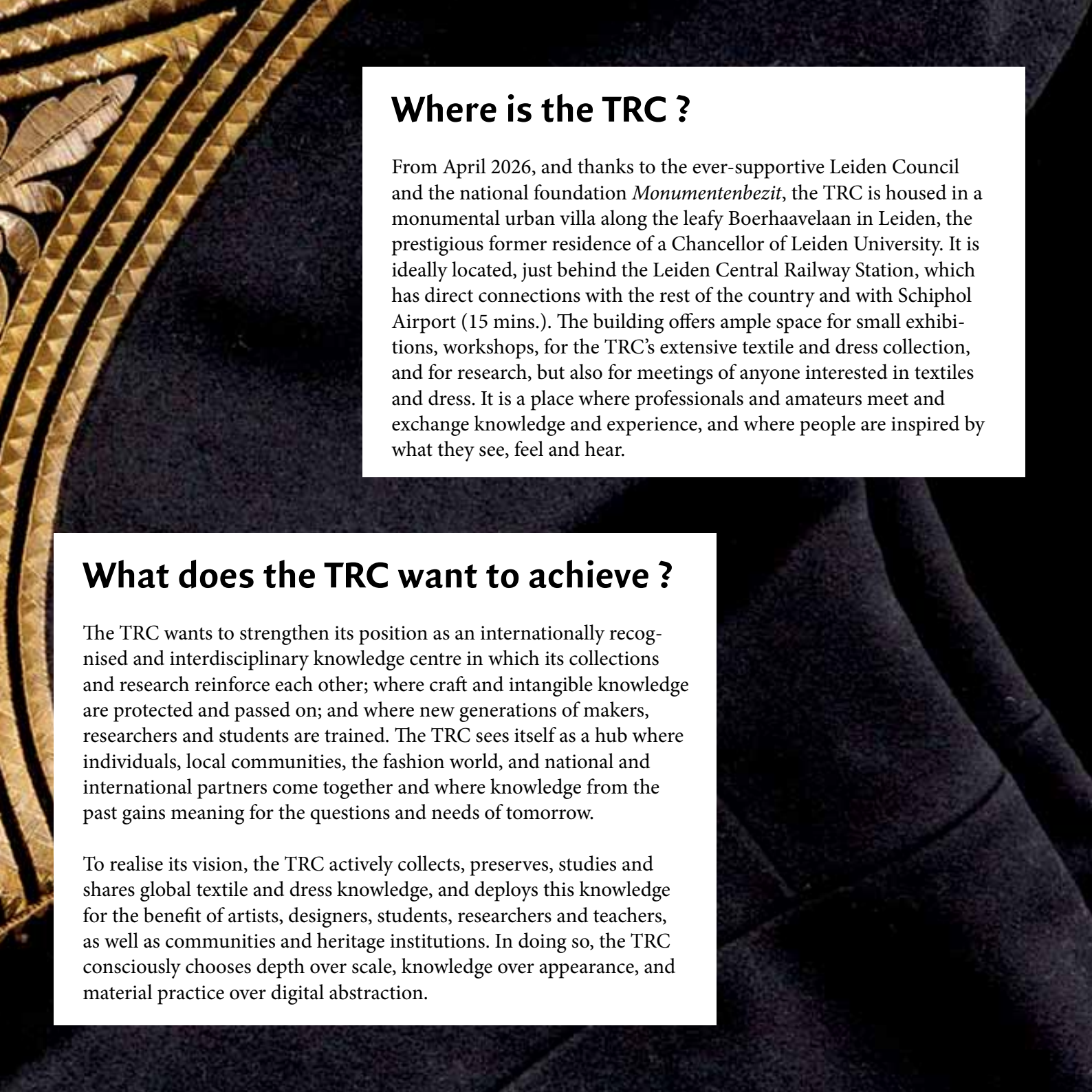
The TRC is also a non-commercial foundation with a core staff of dedicated employees and volunteers, and is carried by generous donations, project financing and funds generated by workshops and other events. It is driven by the enthusiasm of its staff, fellows, interns and volunteers, backed up by an ever-growing number of supporters, in person and online, both nationally and internationally.

The TRC's work resonates worldwide. The TRC is the principal partner in the seminal eight-volume *World Encyclopedia of Embroidery* (Bloomsbury, London, 2016ff.), and the highly successful *The Atlas of World Embroidery* (2026), published by Princeton University Press (USA). Currently the TRC is setting up a textiles, clothing and fashion series that will be published by Princeton University Press, and which will be carried by researchers affiliated to the TRC.



The heart of the TRC: The Collection

TRC's activities revolve around its collection, which forms the beating heart of just about everything the TRC is doing. The collection is an encyclopaedic assemblage of more than 55,500 objects (per 1 August 2026) encompassing techniques, materials, clothing forms, tools, and reference pieces from around the world. The collection is not intended to be kept behind glass, but functions as an active research instrument. Objects are studied, documented, (re)interpreted, and deployed for education and inspiration purposes. Through direct access to the collection, researchers—from fellows and students to curators and makers—analyse techniques, reconstruct historical processes, and interpret cultural meanings. This object-based research forms the core of TRC's knowledge production.



Where is the TRC ?

From April 2026, and thanks to the ever-supportive Leiden Council and the national foundation *Monumentenbezit*, the TRC is housed in a monumental urban villa along the leafy Boerhaavelaan in Leiden, the prestigious former residence of a Chancellor of Leiden University. It is ideally located, just behind the Leiden Central Railway Station, which has direct connections with the rest of the country and with Schiphol Airport (15 mins.). The building offers ample space for small exhibitions, workshops, for the TRC's extensive textile and dress collection, and for research, but also for meetings of anyone interested in textiles and dress. It is a place where professionals and amateurs meet and exchange knowledge and experience, and where people are inspired by what they see, feel and hear.

What does the TRC want to achieve ?

The TRC wants to strengthen its position as an internationally recognised and interdisciplinary knowledge centre in which its collections and research reinforce each other; where craft and intangible knowledge are protected and passed on; and where new generations of makers, researchers and students are trained. The TRC sees itself as a hub where individuals, local communities, the fashion world, and national and international partners come together and where knowledge from the past gains meaning for the questions and needs of tomorrow.

To realise its vision, the TRC actively collects, preserves, studies and shares global textile and dress knowledge, and deploys this knowledge for the benefit of artists, designers, students, researchers and teachers, as well as communities and heritage institutions. In doing so, the TRC consciously chooses depth over scale, knowledge over appearance, and material practice over digital abstraction.

Reaching out

The combination of academic and practice-based approaches makes the TRC's research into textiles and dress both accessible and profound: knowledge is not only acquired and documented but also transferred to a broad scale of interested parties. The TRC firmly believes that education is an essential part of its mission: knowledge only has meaning when it is shared, used, and passed on rather than hoarded. Since 2022 the TRC has Erasmus+ Adult Education Accreditation. This means that exchange of students with other Universities in the EU has been made much easier.

The TRC offers a broad and internationally valued programme of intensive courses, workshops, lectures, and study days. Participants range from specialists to hobbyists, from students to museum staff and employees of (inter)national textile and fashion companies. The TRC Intensive Five-Day Textile Course, for instance, is organised at least five times a year and attracts participants from all over the world. In all educational activities, learning by doing is the core feature.

Business Supporters will have privileged access to the TRC, where they can receive assistance and support with inspiration, creative development, and new ideas.

Tax Benefits

The countries listed below offer generous tax benefits to both individuals and companies that support the TRC. Each country (apart from the USA) has an agency that represents the organisation 'GivingEurope' and handles the transfer of your donation to the Stichting Textile Research Centre in Leiden. They will also provide you with the documents showing your donation as well as the form for your accountant or tax service to use for filing. For the USA, Myriad USA will assist you.

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