

The Number

Ober- &  
Unterbekleidung  
Kombinationen  
Arbeitsbekleidung

# 2,596

The “Everyday Textile Culture” collection at the Institute of Material Culture comprises articles of clothing and textile objects.

It also features around 4,800 documents, 400 fabric samples and 50 historical natural dyes.

The collection has steadily grown since it was first set up 38 years ago. Students and staff can use items from the collection as work materials and for study and research projects.

The collection has plenty of oddities and rare items to offer: from designer clothes by the experimental label Comme de Garçons to a Klepper raincoat from the 1920s that testifies to the development of the first rubber-coated waterproof clothing and a 1990s jersey from German football team Borussia Dortmund with high levels of harmful chemicals. It also features articles of normal, everyday clothing. The collection’s „Clothing and Stories“ concept is unique in Germany. All the articles

of clothing have been worn and some show clear traces of usage. Whenever new items are donated to the collection, in addition to the objects themselves the institute also documents the stories and memories attached to them because they reveal many things about a certain era and its cultural and social context. What gender and body images prevailed at the time? How was clothing cared for and stored? What social function did clothing fulfil at the time?

In addition, the students and staff at the institute are conducting research into materials development and sustainability discourses, the history of costume and design, changes in gender and body perception and textile practices, from the ways in which clothes are cared for to the culture of remembrance and dressing habits.