

## Chair's Report

Dear Friends,  
It has been a year of changes at the ROM. We held our annual meeting in May and heard about the wonderful work our curators have done and continue to do in the area of Textiles & Costume. It really is remarkable how much the staff has accomplished in just twelve months.

Another very busy department is ROM Membership. In an effort to increase communications and opportunities for Members to learn and explore, ROM Membership will no longer charge a \$57 Membership fee to join a Friends Group when you renew membership or become a ROM Member. The future will see the opening of the Centres of Discovery, one of which will be Textiles & Fashions. We believe it is more important than ever that Friends of Textiles & Costume continue our work to bring needed funds into this important area of the ROM. As a Friend of Textiles & Costume, you make it possible to continue FTC's goals of an annual donation to the Burnham Brett Endowment Fund for Special Exhibitions (this year \$6,000), of purchasing needed items for the Textile & Costume Section, of funding a summer intern to assist the curators and textile staff (\$3,200), and of generously supporting FTC's Adopt-a-Journal program which buys important books and periodicals selected by the curators for ROM's library.

When you renew your ROM Membership this year, please remember how important your support is for FTC. A \$50 donation will help tremendously to continue support of FTC's funding goals. Your donations can be directed to ROM Friends of Textiles & Costume and you will get a full tax receipt for all donations, you will continue receiving two e-newsletters annually, and you will become a Friend. If you wish to receive your newsletter by regular mail, please contact ROM Membership at [membership@rom.on.ca](mailto:membership@rom.on.ca) or 416.586.5700. Next year, 2014, is ROM Centennial year and Friends of Textiles & Costume, ROM Members and DMV Members (ROM volunteers) are busy creating a legacy textile. Please don't be shy about getting involved in this exciting project. Thank you for your continued support of Friends of Textiles & Costume.

Betty Finnie-Hunt

## Summer Heat has Turned FTC Centennial Textile Project into a Colourful Fall Presentation

It was a year ago that the Friends of Textiles & Costume announced that they were looking for volunteers to assist with its Centennial Project, commemorative legacy "Textile" celebrating the ROM's 100th year 2014. The Textile will reflect images of artifacts, events or activities representing each collection area of the museum as well architectural and artistic aspects of the ROM itself. The FTC's proposal has gone through several variations since that announcement but a design, with the help of Ralph Neal of Upper Canada House Interior Design, has been finalized and work has commenced on the construction of the Project's details. The Project/Textile will be a mobile of pieces of fabric, triangular in shape, with the images of ROM artifacts reproduced in various textile techniques.



Working model for FTC Textile project

Over 70 images submitted by ROM departments and architectural and artistic aspects of the museum are to be included. Thank you to those volunteers who responded to our original and ongoing requests and are now engrossed in designing and working on their selected images.

With such a large number of images we still require volunteers if we are to get the Project completed, compiled and constructed for March 2014. Anyone who designs, sews, quilts, appliques, cross stitches, weaves, paints or other such activities, please contact one of the 3 names below and we will be happy to discuss the Project in more detail.

For more information please contact Pat Harris, Pat Sparrer or Joan Schiff through the Department of Museum Volunteers at 416-586-8097 or e-mail them directly at:

Pat Harris – [kingcreek@sympatico.ca](mailto:kingcreek@sympatico.ca)  
Joan Schiff – [jschiff@sympatico.ca](mailto:jschiff@sympatico.ca)  
Pat Sparrer – [psparrer@rogers.com](mailto:psparrer@rogers.com)

SAVE THE DATE  
Friends of Textiles & Costume  
Presents

## A Royal Presentation: Curating the dress collection at Kensington Palace

Presenter: Alexandra Kim



From 2008 to 2012, Alexandra Kim was a Curator of Collections at Kensington Palace which is home to the Royal Ceremonial Dress Collection. She will speak to her experiences working with the collection which includes the wedding dresses of both Queen Elizabeth II and her sister Princess Margaret. She will also describe the preparations for Queen Elizabeth's Diamond Jubilee in 2012.

Date: **Friday, November 22, 2013**  
**5 to 6:30 pm**

ROM Eaton Theatre  
Lower Level

Cost: \$15.00 for ROM Members; \$20.00 general public

Watch for the announcement in Members' E-news and then register at **416.586.5700** or [www.rom.on.ca/members/events](http://www.rom.on.ca/members/events).



## Programming for ROM's Centennial

2014 is ROM's 100th anniversary and we are planning a series on the history of the textiles and fashions collection. Proposed are the following programs: 50 Years Plus of Volunteering with the Collection; The Legacy of the Burnham-Brett-Vollmer Years; and What Does the Future Hold?

Watch for further announcements.



# Friends of Textiles & Costume

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## "Behind the Scenes at the Costume Institute, Metropolitan Museum of Art" - Chris Paulocik, Conservator FTC presentation, April 5, 2013



Chris works on the treatment of a straw hat

Chris Paulocik spoke about her 22 years as the Conservator at the Costume Institute of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. She illustrated with examples from the collection's over 35,000 objects both western and regional: everything from early archaeological shoes and Tudor caps to current runway fashions. Chris also spoke about the diversity of materials: snakeskin, feathers, paper, rubber or even electronic components. Examples were shown of the various conservation treatments from remedial surface cleaning of a bicorne hat to a more complex localized stain removal on an 18th c. gown using a suction table.

While at the Costume Institute Chris worked on over 60 exhibitions with a wide range of topics and a diversity of artifacts such as "Rock Style", "Poiret", "Superheroes" and "Alexander McQueen". She outlined issues with the exhibition "Dangerous Liaisons" where the greatest challenge was attempting to evoke character and animation to static mannequins in period rooms.

During her tenure at the CI, it was necessary for Chris to investigate and research topics

such as modern materials and 18th c. painted silk costume as a response to the acquisition of these types of artifacts. She explained the challenges with the conservation of contemporary pieces which are increasingly composed of new materials, surface coatings or ephemeral elements riddled with inherent vice. It was necessary through the years to develop identification techniques, treatment options as well as storage solutions for these new materials in the collection. As a response to these issues Chris organized and hosted various symposia at the MMA which provided a forum for conservators, scientists and curators to discuss these issues.

## "Chinese Rank Badges" - Dr. Sarah Fee, Curator, Eastern Hemisphere Textile & Costume FTC Presentation, May 3, 2013

The ROM owns one of the world's premier collections of Chinese costume and textiles, close to 2,700 items. Of these pieces, 380 are insignia badges, better known as "rank badges" or "Mandarin squares."

From Ming times and up to 1911, square badges were worn by government officials on the outside (front and back) of their dark surcoats to communicate rank in the official Chinese bureaucracy. Animals were used to represent the 9 grades in both Civilian and in Military branches. All the intricacies of Chinese cosmology are expressed in these colorful -- and often whimsical -- squares, which were fashioned through tapestry, couching and/or embroidery. The general format places the animal at the center of the composition, standing on earth or rock which jut from waters, while sky and clouds fill the upper reaches. The animal looks over its left shoulder to a red sun disc, said to represent the Emperor. The exception is the top military rank, which is represented by the qilin, a mythical beast -- part stag and dragon -- which looks straight at the viewer. In many pieces, auspicious symbols appear in the form of flowers, bats and religious signs. The wives of officials also wore badges, the



950.100.80.A-C Insignia badge, 5th civilian rank silver pheasant, with Buddhist and precious objects, tapestry and painted detail, ca. 1800-1850

difference being that the animal looks over its right shoulder to view the sun disc.

Civilian officials' symbols were all birds, perhaps because their wisdom took them closer to the heavens. The ROM holds 252 examples of civilian badges of all 9 ranks; represented in the greatest number are the 3rd and 4th ranking Silver and Gold Pheasant, distinctive for their long, jagged tail feathers. Military officials climbed in rank through physical feats and were fittingly represented by strong mammals, including lions, bears and leopards. The ROM owns 71 such badges.

In 2012, T&C embarked on a project to prepare the badges for an anticipated web display. Thanks to the efforts of technicians and volunteers, the badges were all photographed, re-catalogued and re-housed in state-of-the-art storage.



950.100.80.A-C Insignia badge, (detail of above)

### Chloë Sayer, Veronika Gervers Research Fellow

Chloë Sayer, will be the next Veronika Gervers Research Fellow. The title of her research is **Living Threads: Cloth, Dress and Identity through Mexican History**. Her research will culminate in an exhibition in the Patricia Harris Gallery in 2015 to co-incide with the Toronto Pan Am Games.

### Karen Donaldson, Collections Management Intern

Last spring as a Collections Conservation and Management student at Fleming College I did a curriculum-based internship under senior technician, Karla Livingston. I assisted in the installation of artifacts in the gallery, mount making, storage upgrades, and inventories of the collection. My main project entailed rehusing part of the archaeological collection.

I have an undergraduate degree in Costume Studies from Dalhousie University. I have worked as a costumer for theatre, dance, and film in Toronto as well as a costume designer, pattern drafter, stitcher, and co-ordinator for many companies including the Canadian Opera Company, Mirvish, and Bravo. I also have my own swimwear line, Minnow Bath-ers.

During my internship at the ROM I have gained invaluable skills; broadening my knowledge in the care of museum collections. I graduated from Fleming last June.



Karen working on an installation for BIG



**In September the intention is to hire Karen Donaldson under the FTC-funded internship.**



Two of the periodicals available in the ROM library. Your donation could fund their subscription.

### Spotlight on the ROM Library & Archives

A great resource for Friends of Textiles & Costume who wish to learn more about the collections, or simply to develop a personal interest, is the selection of periodicals that are available for consultation in the Sackler Reading Room, located on the main floor of the Museum. The ROM Library subscribes to more than 200 journals and magazines on topics relating to the collections; and this includes a large number of leading publications, both Canadian and international in scope, on a myriad of topics relating to textiles, costume and fashion. The Sackler Reading Room is open throughout the week and accessible to anyone, whether scholars or members of the general public.

These library holdings are of course particularly valuable for ROM curators, university professors and students, from a host of different institutions, who rely on the ROM Library to access the most up-to-date scholarship in their areas of research. Indeed, the textiles and costume holdings are the most frequently used in the Library, but this resource is remarkably expensive to maintain, and that is why it has always been a part of the FTC's mandate to raise funds in order to supplement the Library's budget for periodicals. Our "Adopt-a-Journal" initiative attempts to do just this, by offering Friends of Textiles & Costume the opportunity to help by making a tax-deductible donation in the form of a periodical subscription. The ROM Library will be happy to acknowledge your support by recording your name on a display card in the Sackler Reading Room. You could also consider donating in the name of friends or family members. Please see the list of subscription opportunities on the website of the ROM Library & Archives. Any queries may be sent to [ftc.aaj@gmail.com](mailto:ftc.aaj@gmail.com)

### Born of the Indian Ocean: Madagascar silks on display in the ROM's Ondaajite/Wirth Galleries

Madagascar is home to a rich and varied hand-weaving history. The women of this African island make striped rectangular wrappers from a wide variety of fibres and dyes. In the 19th century, professional weavers in the central highlands took the art in unexpected directions. Using newly imported 'Chinese' silk (Bombyx mori), they shook up the staid colour palette to include brilliant shades -- magenta, teal, purple -- and began making enigmatic plant-like motifs using supplementary wefts. The results were enormous shawls, vividly coloured and intricately patterned. Admiring European authors of the time compared the cloth to stained glass and kashmir shawls.



ROM2010.75.1 Akotifahana cloth, 19th c.

Since 2008, T&C curator Dr. Sarah Fee has been researching this extraordinary textile art. Finding many assumptions and questions in the published literature, she tracked down a variety of primary sources. In Germany, the UK, France, the US and Madagascar she studied archival documents -- from trade records to royal wardrobe registers -- as well as akotifahana pieces in museum collections. To record historic memory and weaving techniques, she interviewed and filmed contemporary silk brocade weavers in highland



Highland Malagasy woman weaving an akotifahana (postcard collection Sarah Fee)

### Born of the Indian Ocean: Madagascar silks cont'd

Madagascar who have continued the art into the 21st century, although in new and modern ways. Through purchases and generous donations, she acquired over 8 akotifahana for the ROM, making it North America's largest collection of this cloth type.

The culmination of this research will be on display in the Temporary Exhibition Case of the ROM's Ondaajite/Wirth Galleries, from November 3, 2013. The exhibit will feature 19th century silk textiles as well as supporting images and graphics, all drawn from ROM collections.

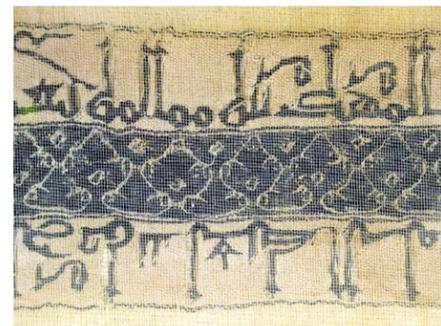
### Mark Your Calendars:



Photo credit: Chris Chapman

Izzy Camilleri's wheelchair coat

Two exhibitions will open in the Patricia Harris Gallery of Textiles & Costume in June 2014: **Abled Disabled: Adaptive Fashions** featuring pioneering and revolutionary clothing designs for people with disabilities by Canadian fashion designer Izzy Camilleri and **Cairo Under Wraps: textiles and costume in Egypt under Islam-the first six centuries**



ROM970.364.2 "Cairo Under Wraps" Egyptian Islamic tapestry

### The Lillian Williams 18th Century Fashion Collection

The ROM has recently acquired part of the Lillian Williams Collection of important 18th century women's fashions that has been funded by the Louise Hawley Stone Strategic Acquisition Fund. Lillian Williams is a private American collector living in France whose collection and lifestyle focuses on the 18th century. Her collection is one of the only extensive 18th century collections of fashion still in private hands and has some exceptional garments that have been lent for international exhibitions and catalogues. The acquisition significantly enhances and fills gaps in the ROM's 18th century textile and costume collection and allows the museum to better tell the story of the development of 18th century female fashion with iconic examples in terms of cut, textiles, embroidery and condition. The pieces selected for the Strategic application are the rarest and most sought after by all international costume collections.

Among the pieces acquired were French panniers c 1770. Panniers are undergarments worn under a dress or petticoat to support the skirt and define the silhouette. The hinged hoop is a beautiful sculptural object and a fascinating representation of the life, manners and technology in the second half of the 18th century.



Photo credit: ROM

Included was a quilted mantua (English c 1720-40) which was worn as a formal dressing gown and offered comfort and warmth as a new garment for relaxed elegance, or negligée. It is a morning robe to be worn for business with trades people within the home

Another acquisition was a riding jacket, matching waistcoat, habit shirt and tricorne hat (English, 1765-75). These are garments that reflect

women's adoption of men's wear for sport and physical activities in its cut and cloth. By the mid-eighteenth century women's riding habits had become an essential part of the middle and upper class wardrobe. The habit was so comfortable and functional that it was adopted for travelling and increasingly worn as informal day wear for walking and visiting, and even suitable attire for portraiture.



Photo credit: ROM

The plaited straw hat with ribbons, above, (French, 1787-1797) shows the influence of Anglomania, the French adoption of English fashions in the late 18th century. The hat is a fantastic and rare example of this high fashion that is depicted in the fashion plates of the day.



Photo credit: ROM

Pictured above is one of a collection of stays (French and Italian c 1710-1780) that were part of the acquisition. For the past 400 years western women have worn some kind of corset -- called stays in the 18th century-- to shape the torso in to an ideal form according to shifting fashionable tastes. Stays were an essential item of clothing for all women regardless of class. The Williams collection of 9 women's stays includes a pair for young woman, an infant and even for pregnancy.